ADVENTURES

OF

CALEB WILLIAMS.

THINGS AS THEY ARE;

OR, THE

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OF

CALEB WILLIAMS.

BY WILLIAM GODWIN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CHAP. I.

I HAVE stated the narrative of Mr. Collins, interspersed with such other information as I was able to collect, with all the exactness that my memory, assisted by certain memorandums I made at the time, will afford. I do not pretend to warrant the authenticity of any part of these memoirs, except so much as fell under my own knowledge, and that part shall be stated with the same simplicity

and accuracy, that I would observe towards a court which was to decide in the last resort upon every thing dear to me. The same scrupulous fidelity restrains me from altering the manner of Mr. Collins's narrative to adapt it to the precepts of my own taste; and it will soon be perceived how essential that narrative is to the elucidation of my own history.

The intention of my friend in this communication was to give me ease; but he in reality added to my embarrassment. Hitherto I had had no intercourse with the world and its passions; and, though I was not totally unacquainted with them as they appear in books, this proved of little service to me when I came to witness them myself. The case seemed entirely altered, when the subject of those passions was continually before my eyes, and the events had happened but the other day as it were, in the very neighbourhood

where I lived. There was a connection and progress in this narrative, which made it altogether unlike the little village incidents I had hitherto known. My feelings were successively interested for the different persons that were brought upon the scene. My veneration was excited for Mr. Clare, and my applause for the intrepidity of Mrs. Hammond. I was astonished that any human creature should be so shockingly perverted as Mr. Tyrrel. I paid the tribute of my tears to the memory of the artless miss Melvile. I found a thousand fresh reasons to admire and love Mr. Falkland.

At first I was satisfied with thus considering every incident in its obvious sense. But the story I had heard was for ever in my thoughts, and I was peculiarly interested to comprehend its full import. I turned it a thousand ways, and examined it in every point of view. In

the original communication it appeared sufficiently distinct and satisfactory; but, as I brooded over it, it gradually became mysterious. There was something strange in the character of Hawkins. So firm, so sturdily honest and just, as he appeared at first; all at once to become a murderer! His first behaviour under the prosecution, how accurately was it calculated to prepossess one in his favour! To be sure, if he were guilty, it was unpardonable in him to permit a man of so much dignity and worth as Mr. Falkland, to suffer under the imputation of his crime! And yet I could not help bitterly compassionating the honest fellow, brought to the gallows, as he was strictly speaking, by the machinations of that devil incarnate, Mr. Tyrrel. His son too, that son for whom he voluntarily sacrificed his all, to die with him at the same tree; surely never was a story more affecting!

Was it possible after all, that Mr. Falkland should be the murderer? The reader will scarcely believe, that the idea suggested itself to my mind that I would ask him. It was but a passing thought; but it serves to mark the simplicity of my character. Then I recollected the virtues of my master, almost too sublime for human nature; I thought of his sufferings so unexampled, so unmerited; and chid myself for the suspicion. The dying confession of Hawkins recurred to my mind; and I felt that there was no longer a possibility of doubting. And yet what was the meaning of all Mr. Falkland's agonies and terrors? In fine, the idea having once occurred to my mind, it was fixed there for ever. My thoughts fluctuated from conjecture to conjecture, but this was the centre about which they revolved. I determined to place myself as a watch upon my patron.

The instant I had chosen this employ-

ment for myself, I found a strange sort of pleasure in it. To do what is forbidden always has its charms, because we have an indistinct apprehension of something arbitrary and tyrannical in the prohibition. To be a spy upon Mr. Falkland! That there was danger in the employment, served to give an alluring pungency to the choice. I remembered the stern reprimand I had received, and his terrible looks; and the recollection gave a kind of tingling sensation, not altogether unallied to enjoyment. The further I advanced, the more the sensation was irresistible. I seemed to myself perpetually upon the brink of being countermined, and perpetually roused to guard my designs. The more impenetrable Mr. Falkland was determined to be, the more uncontrolable was my curiosity. Through the whole, my alarm and apprehension of personal danger, had a large mixture of frankness and

simplicity, conscious of meaning no ill, that made me continually ready to say every thing that was upon my mind, and would not suffer me to believe that, when things were brought to the test, any one could be seriously angry with me.

These reflections led gradually to a new state of my mind. When I had first removed into Mr. Falkland's family, the novelty of the scene rendered me cautious and reserved. The distant and solemn manners of my master seemed to have annihilated my constitutional gaiety. But the novelty by degrees wore off, and my constraint in the same degree diminished. The story I had now heard, and the curiosity it excited, restored to me activity, eagerness and courage. I had always had a propensity to communicate my thoughts; my age was of course inclined to talkativeness; and I ventured occasionally in a sort of hesitating way, as if questioning whether such

a conduct might be allowed, to express my sentiments as they arose, in the presence of Mr. Falkland.

The first time I did so, he looked at me with an air of surprise, made me no answer, and presently took occasion to leave me. The experiment was soon after repeated. My master seemed half inclined to encourage me, and yet doubtful whether he might venture. He had long been a stranger to pleasure of every sort, and my artless and untaught remarks appeared to promise him some amusement. Could an amusement of this sort be dangerous?

In this uncertainty he could not probably find it in his heart to treat with severity my innocent effusions. I needed but little encouragement: for the perturbation of my mind stood in want of this relief. My simplicity, arising from my being a total stranger to the intercourse of the world, was accompanied

with a mind in some degree cultivated with reading, and perhaps not altogether destitute of observation and talent. My remarks were therefore perpetually unexpected, at one time implying extreme ignorance, and at another some portion of acuteness, but at all times having an air of innocence, frankness and courage. There was still an apparent want of design in the manner, even after I was excited accurately to compare my observations, and study the inferences to which they led; for the effect of old habit was more visible, than that of a recently conceived purpose which was yet scarcely mature.

Mr. Falkland's situation was like that of a fish that plays with the bait employed to entrap him. By my manner he was in a certain degree encouraged to lay aside his usual reserve, and relax his stateliness; till some abrupt observation or interrogatory stung him into recollec-

tion, and brought back his alarm. Still it was evident that he bore about him a secret wound. Whenever the cause of his sorrows was touched, though in a manner the most indirect and remote, his countenance altered, his distemper returned, and it was with difficulty that he could suppress his emotions, sometimes conquering himself with painful effort, and sometimes bursting into a sort of paroxysm of insanity, and hastening to bury himself in solitude.

These appearances I too frequently interpreted into grounds of suspicion, though I might with equal probability and more liberality have ascribed them to the cruel mortifications he had encountered in the objects of his darling ambition. Mr. Collins had strongly urged me to secrecy; and Mr. Falkland, whenever my gesture or his consciousness impressed him with the idea of my knowing more than I expressed, looked at me with

wistful earnestness, as questioning what was the degree of information I possessed, and how it was obtained. But again at our next interview the simple vivacity of my manner restored his tranquillity, obliterated the emotion of which I had been the cause, and placed things afresh in their former situation.

The longer this humble familiarity on my part had continued, the more effort it would require to suppress it; and Mr. Falkland was neither willing to mortify me by a severe prohibition of speech, nor even perhaps to make me of so much consequence, as that prohibition might seem to imply. Though I was curious, it must not be supposed that I had the object of my enquiry for ever in my mind, or that my questions and innuendoes were perpetually regulated with the cunning of a grey-headed inquisitor. The secret wound of Mr. Falkland's mind was much more uniformly present to his re-

collection than to mine; and a thousand times he applied the remarks that occurred in conversation; when I had not the remotest idea of such an application, till some singularity in his manner brought it back to my thoughts. The consciousness of this morbid sensibility, and the imagination that its influence might perhaps constitute the whole of the case, served probably to spur Mr. Falkland again to the charge, and connect a sentiment of shame, with every project that suggested itself for interrupting the freedom of our intercourse.

I will give a specimen of the conversations to which I allude; and, as it shall be selected from those which began upon topics the most general and remote, the reader will easily imagine the disturbance that was almost daily endured by a mind so tremblingly alive as that of my patron.

Pray, sir, said I, one day as I was as-

sisting Mr. Falkland in arranging some papers, previously to their being transcribed into his collection, how came Alexander of Macedon to be surnamed the Great?

How came it? Did you never read his history?

Yes, sir.

Well, Williams, and could you find no reasons there?

Why, I do not know, sir. I could find reasons why he should be famous; but every man that is talked of, is not admired. Judges differ about the merits of Alexander. Doctor Prideaux says in his Connections that he deserves only to be called the Great Cut-throat; and the author of Tom Jones has written a volume, to prove that he and all other conquerors ought to be classed with Jonathan Wild.

Mr. Falkland reddened at these citations.

Accursed blasphemy! Did these authors think that, by the coarseness of their ribaldry, they could destroy his well earned fame? Are learning, sensibility and taste, no securities to exempt their possessor from this vulgar abuse? Did you ever read, Williams, of a man more gallant, generous and free? Was ever mortal so completely the reverse of every thing engrossing and selfish? He formed to himself a sublime image of excellence, and his only ambition was to realise it in his own story. Remember his giving away every thing when he set out upon his grand expedition, professedly reserving for himself nothing but hope. Recollect his heroic confidence in Philip, the physician, and his entire and unalterable friendship for Ephestion. He treated the captive family of Darius with the most cordial urbanity, and the venerable Sysigambis with all the tenderness and at-

tention of a son to his mother. Never take the judgment, Williams, upon such a subject, of a clerical pedant, or a Westminster justice. Examine for yourself, and you will find in Alexander a model of honour, generosity and disinterestedness, a man who, for the cultivated liberality of his mind, and the unparalleled grandeur of his projects, must stand alone the spectacle and admiration of all ages of the world.

Ah, sir! it is a fine thing for us to sit here and compose his panegyric. But shall I forget what a vast expence was bestowed in erecting the monument of his fame? Was not he the common disturber of mankind? Did not he overrun nations that would never have heard of him, but for his devastations? How many hundred thousands of lives did he sacrifice in his career? What must I think of his cruelties; a whole tribe massacred for a crime committed by their

ancestors one hundred and fifty years before; fifty thousand sold into slavery; two thousand crucified for their gallant defence of their country? Man is surely a strange sort of creature, who never praises any one more heartily than him who has spread destruction and ruin over the face of nations!

The way of thinking you express, Williams, is natural enough, and I cannot blame you for it. But let me hope that you will become more *liberal*. The death of a hundred thousand men is at first sight very shocking; but what in reality are a hundred thousand such men, more than a hundred thousand sheep? It is mind, Williams, the generation of knowledge and virtue, that we ought to love. This was the project of Alexander; he set out in a great undertaking to civilise mankind; he delivered the vast continent of Asia from the stupidity and degradation of the Persian mo-

narchy; and, though he was cut off in the midst of his career, we may easily perceive the vast effects of his project. Grecian literature and cultivation, the Seleucidæ, the Antiochuses and the Ptolomies followed, in nations which before had been sunk to the condition of brutes. Alexander was the builder, as notoriously as the destroyer, of cities.

And yet, sir, I am afraid that the pike and the battle-axe are not the right instruments for making men wise. Suppose it were admitted that the lives of men were to be sacrificed without remorse if a paramount good were to result, it seems to me as if murder and massacre were but a very left-handed way of producing civilisation and love. But pray, do not you think this great hero was a sort of a madman? What now will you say to his firing the palace of Persepolis, his weeping for other worlds to conquer, and his marching his whole

army over the burning sands of Lybia, merely to visit a temple, and persuade mankind that he was the son of Jupiter Ammon?

Alexander, my boy, has been much misunderstood. Mankind have revenged themselves upon him by misrepresentation, for having so far eclipsed the rest of his species. It was necessary to the realising his project, that he should pass for a God. It was the only way by which he could get a firm hold upon the veneration of the stupid and bigoted Persians. It was this, and not a mad vanity, that was the source of his proceeding. And how much had he to struggle with in this respect, in the unapprehending obstinacy of some of his Macedonians?

Why then, sir, at last Alexander did but employ means that all politicians profess to use, as well as he. He dragooned men into wisdom, and cheated them into the pursuit of their own happi-

ness. But what is worse, sir, this Alexander, in the paroxysm of his headlong rage, spared neither friend nor foe. You will not pretend to justify the excesses of his ungovernable passion. It is impossible sure that a word can be said, for a man whom a momentary provocation can hurry into the commission of murders——

The instant I had uttered these words, I felt what it was that I had done. There was a magnetical sympathy between me and my patron, so that their effect was not sooner produced upon him, than my own mind reproached me with the inhumanity of the allusion. Our confusion was mutual. The blood forsook at once the transparent complexion of Mr. Falkland, and then rushed back again with rapidity and fierceness. I dared not utter a word, lest I should commit a new error, worse than that into which I had just fallen. After a short, but severe, struggle to continue the conversation, Mr.

Falkland began with trepidation, but afterwards became calmer:

You are not candid--Alexander—You must learn more clemency—Alexander, I say, does not deserve this rigour. Do you remember his tears, his remorse, his determined abstinence from food, which he could scarcely be persuaded to relinquish? Did not that prove acute feeling and a rooted principle of equity?—Well, well, Alexander was a true and judicious lover of mankind, and his real merits have been little comprehended.

I know not how to make the state of my mind at that moment accurately understood. When one idea has got possession of the soul, it is scarcely possible to keep it from finding its way to the lips. Error, once committed, has a fascinating power, like that ascribed to the eyes of the rattlesnake, to draw us into a second error. It deprives us of that proud confidence in our own strength, to which we are

indebted for so much of our virtue. Curiosity is a restless propensity, and often does but hurry us forward the more irresistibly, the greater is the danger that attends its indulgence.

Clitus, said I, was a man of very coarse and provoking manners, was he not?

Mr. Falkland felt the full force of this appeal. He gave me a penetrating look, as if he would see my very soul. His eyes were then in an instant withdrawn. I could perceive him seized with a convulsive shuddering which, though strongly counteracted, and therefore scarcely visible, had I know not what of terrible in it. He left his employment, strode about the room in anger, his visage gradually assumed an expression as of supernatural barbarity, he quitted the apartment abruptly, and flung the door with a violence that seemed to shake the house.

Is this, said I, the fruit of conscious guilt, or of the disgust that a man of honour conceives at guilt undeservedly imputed?

CHAP. II.

The reader will feel how rapidly I was advancing to the brink of the precipice. I had a confused apprehension of what I was doing, but I could not stop myself. Is it possible, said I, that Mr. Falkland, who is thus overwhelmed with a sense of the unmerited dishonour that has been fastened upon him in the face of the world, will long endure the presence of a raw and unfriended youth, who is perpetually bringing back that dishonour to his recollection, and who seems himself the most forward to entertain the accusation?

I felt indeed that Mr. Falkland would not hastily incline to dismiss me, for the same reason that restrained him from many other actions, which might seem to

savour of a too tender and ambiguous sensibility. But this reflection was little adapted to comfort me. That he should cherish in his heart a growing hatred against me, and that he should think himself obliged to retain me a continual thorn in his side, was an idea by no means of favourable augury to my future peace.

It was some time after this that, in clearing out a case of drawers, I found a paper that, by some accident, had slipped behind one of the drawers, and been overlooked. At another time perhaps my curiosity might have given way to the laws of decorum, and I should have restored it unopened to my master, its owner. But my eagerness for information had been too much stimulated by the preceding incidents, to allow me at present to neglect any occasion of obtaining it. The paper proved to be a letter written by the elder Hawkins, and from its contents seemed

to have been penned, when he had first been upon the point of absconding from the persecutions of Mr. Tyrrel. It was as follows.

Honourable Sir,

I have waited some time in daily hope of your honour's return into these parts. Old Warnes and his dame, who are left to take care of your house, tell me they cannot say when that will be, nor justly in what part of England you are at present. For my share, misfortune comes so thick upon me, that I must determine upon something (that is for certain), and out of hand. Our squire, who I must own at first used me kindly enough, though I am afraid that was partly out of spite to squire Underwood, has since determined to be the ruin of me. Sir, I have been no craven; I fought it up stoutly; for after all, you know, God bless your ho-

nour! it is but a man to a man; but he has been too much for me.

Perhaps if I were to ride over to the market-town and enquire of Munsle, your lawyer, he could tell me how to direct to you. But having hoped and waited o' this fashion, and all in vain, has put me upon other thoughts. I was in no hurry, sir, to apply to you; for I do not love to be a trouble to any body. I kept that for my last stake. Well, sir, and now that has failed me like, I am ashamed as it were to have thought of it. Have not I, thinks I, arms and legs as well as other people? I am driven out of house and home. Well, and what then? Sure I arn't a cabbage, that if you pull it out of the ground, it must die. I am pennyless. True; and how many hundreds are there that live from hand to mouth all the days of their life? (Begging your honour's pardon) thinks I, if we little folks had but the wit to do for

ourselves, the great folks would not be such maggotty changelings as they are. They would begin to look about them.

But there is another thing that has swayed with me more than all the rest. I do not know how to tell you, sir—My poor boy, my Leonard, the pride of my life, has been three weeks in the county-jail. It is true indeed, sir. Squire Tyrrel put him there. Now, sir, every time that I lay my head upon my pillow under my own little roof, my heart smites me with the situation of my Leonard. I do not mean so much for the hardship; I do not so much matter that. I do not expect him to go through the world upon velvet! I am not such a fool. But who can tell what may hap in a jail? I have been three times to see him; and there is one man in the same quarter of the prison that looks so wicked! I do not much fancy the looks of the rest. To be sure Leonard is as good a lad as ever lived.

I think he will not give his mind to such. But, come what will, I am determined he shall not stay among them twelve hours longer. I am an obstinate old fool perhaps; but I have taken it into my head, and I will do it. Do not ask me what. But, if I were to write to your honour, and wait for your answer, it might take a week or ten days more. I must not think of it!

Squire Tyrrel is very headstrong, and you, your honour, might be a little hottish or so. No, I would not have any body quarrel for me. There has been mischief enough done already; and I will get myself out of the way. So I write this, your honour, merely to unload my mind. I feel myself equally as much bound to respect and love you, as if you had done every thing for me that I believe you would have done if things had chanced differently. It is most likely you will never hear of me any more. If

it should be so, set your worthy heart at rest. I know myself too well, ever to be tempted to do any thing that is really bad. I have now my fortune to seek in the world. I have been used ill enough, God knows. But I bear no malice; my heart is at peace with all mankind; and I forgive every body. It is like enough that poor Leonard and I may have hardship enough to undergo, among strangers, and being obliged to hide ourselves like housebreakers or highwaymen. But I defy all the malice of fortune to make us do an ill thing. That consolation we will always keep against all the crosses of a heart-breaking world.

God bless you!

So prays,

Your honour's humble servant

to command,

BENJAMIN HAWKINS.

I read this letter with considerable attention, and it occasioned me many re-

flections. To my way of thinking it contained a very interesting picture of a blunt, downright, honest mind. It is a melancholy consideration, said I to myself; but such is man! To have judged from appearances one would have said, this is a fellow, to have taken fortune's buffets and rewards with an incorruptible mind. And yet see where it all ends! This man was capable of afterwards becoming a murderer, and finishing his life at the gallows. O poverty! thou art indeed omnipotent! Thou grindest us into desperation; thou confoundest all our boasted and most deep-rooted principles; thou fillest us to the very brim with malice and revenge, and renderest us capable of acts of unknown horror! May I never be visited by thee in the fulness of thy power!

Having satisfied my curiosity with respect to this paper, I took care to dispose of it in such a manner as that it should be

found by Mr. Falkland; at the same time that, in obedience to the principle which at present governed me with absolute dominion, I was willing that the way in which it offered itself to his attention, should suggest to him the idea that it had possibly passed through my hands. The next morning I saw him, and I exerted myself to lead the conversation, which by this time I well knew how to introduce, by insensible degrees to the point I desired. After several previous questions, remarks and rejoinders, I continued:

Well, sir, after all, I cannot help feeling very uncomfortably as to my ideas of human nature, when I find that there is no dependence to be placed upon its perseverance, and that, at least among the illiterate, the most promising appearances may end in the foulest disgrace.

You think then that literature and a

cultivated mind are the only assurance for the constancy of our principles!

Humh!—why do you suppose, sir, that learning and ingenuity do not often serve people rather to hide their crimes, than to restrain them from committing them? History tells us strange things in that respect.

Williams! said Mr. Falkland, a little disturbed, you are extremely given to censure and severity.

I hope not. I am sure I am most fond of looking on the other side of the picture, and considering how many men, have been aspersed, and even at some time or other almost torn to pieces by their fellow creatures, whom, when properly understood, we find worthy of our reverence and love.

Indeed, replied Mr. Falkland with a sigh, when I consider these things, I do not wonder at the dying exclamation of

Brutus, O Virtue! I sought thee as a substance, but I find thee an empty name! I am too much inclined to be of his opinion.

Why, to be sure, sir, innocence and guilt are too much confounded in human life. I remember an affecting story of a poor man in the reign of queen Elizabeth, who would have infallibly been hanged for murder upon the strength of circumstantial evidence, if the person really concerned had not been himself upon the jury, and prevented it.

In saying this I touched the spring that wakened madness in his mind. He came up to me with a ferocious countenance, as if determined to force me into a confession of my thoughts. A sudden pang however seemed to change his design; he drew back with trepidation; and exclaimed, Detested be the universe, and the laws that govern it! Honour, justice, virtue are all the juggle of knaves! If it

were in my power, I would instantly crush the whole system into nothing!

I replied; Oh, sir! things are not so bad as you imagine. The world was made for men of sense to do what they will with. Its affairs cannot be better than in the direction of the genuine heroes; and, as in the end they will be found the truest friends of the whole, so the multitude have nothing to do, but to look on, be fashioned and admire.

Mr. Falkland made a powerful effort to recover his tranquillity. Williams! said he, you instruct me well. You have a right notion of things, and I have great hopes of you. I will be more of a man. I will forget the past, and do better for the time to come. The future, the future is always our own.

I am sorry, sir, that I have given you pain. I am afraid to say all that I think. But it is my opinion that mistakes will ultimately be cleared up, justice done,

and the true state of things come to light in spite of the false colours that may for a time obscure it.

The idea I suggested did not give Mr. Falkland the proper degree of delight. He suffered a temporary relapse. Justice! —he muttered. I do not know what is justice. My case is not within the reach of common remedies; perhaps of none. I only know that I am miserable. I began life with the best intentions and the most fervid philanthropy; and here I am —miserable—miserable beyond expression or endurance.

Having said this, he seemed suddenly to recollect himself, and re-assume his accustomed dignity and command. How came this conversation? cried he. Who gave you a right to be my confident? Base, artful wretch that you are! learn to be more respectful! Are my passions to be wound and unwound by an insolent domestic? Do you think I will be an in-

strument to be played on at your pleasure, till you have extorted all the treasures of my soul? Begone, and fear lest you be made to pay for the temerity you have already committed.

There was an energy and determination in the gestures with which these words were accompanied, that did not admit of their being disputed. My mouth was closed; I felt as if deprived of all share of activity, and was only able silently and passively to quit the apartment.

CHAP. III.

Two days subsequent to this conversation Mr. Falkland ordered me to be called to him. [I shall continue to speak in my narrative of the silent, as well as the articulate part of the intercourse between us. His countenance was habitually animated and expressive, much beyond that of any other man I have seen. The curiosity which, as I have said, constituted my ruling passion, stimulated me to make it my perpetual study. It will also most probably happen, while I am thus employed in collecting the scattered incidents of my history, that I shall upon some occasions annex to appearances an explanation, which I was far from possessing at the time, and was only suggested to me through the medium of subsequent events.]

When I entered the apartment, I remarked in Mr. Falkland's countenance an unwonted composure. This composure however did not seem to result from internal ease, but from an effort which, while he prepared himself for an interesting scene, was exerted to prevent his presence of mind, and power of voluntary action, from suffering any diminution.

Williams, said he, I am determined, whatever it may cost me, to have an explanation with you. You are a rash and inconsiderate boy, and have given me much disturbance. You ought to have known that, though I allow you to talk with me upon indifferent subjects, it is very improper in you to lead the conversation to any thing that relates to my personal concerns. You have said many things lately in a very mysterious way, and appear to know something more than I am aware of. I am equally at a loss to guess how you came by your

knowledge, as of what it consists. But I think I perceive too much inclination on your part to trifle with my peace of mind. That ought not to be, nor have I deserved any such treatment from you. But, be that as it will, the guesses in which you oblige me to employ myself, are too painful. It is a sort of sporting with my feelings, which, as a man of resolution, I am determined to bring to an end. I expect you therefore to lay aside all mystery and equivocation, and inform me explicitly what it is upon which your allusions are built. What is it you know? What is it you want? I have been too much exposed already to unparalleled mortification and hardship, and my wounds will not bear this perpetual tampering.

I feel, sir, answered I, how wrong I have been, and am ashamed that such a one as I should have given you all this trouble and displeasure. I felt it at the time; but I have been hurried along

I do not know how. I have always tried to stop myself, but the demon that possessed me was too strong for me. I know nothing, sir, but what Mr. Collins told me. He told me the story of Mr. Tyrrel and miss Melvile and Hawkins. I am sure, sir, he said nothing but what was to your honour, and proved you to be more an angel than a man.

Well, sir: I found a letter written by that Hawkins the other day: did not that letter fall into your hands? Did not you read it?

For God's sake, sir, turn me out of your house. Punish me in some way or other, that I may forgive myself. I am a foolish, wicked, despicable wretch. I confess, sir, I did read the letter.

And how dared you read it? It was indeed very wrong of you. But we will talk of that by and by. Well, and what did you say to the letter? You know it seems that Hawkins was hanged.

I say, sir? why it went to my heart to read it. I say, as I said the day before yesterday, that, when I see a man of so much principle afterwards deliberately proceeding to the very worst of crimes, I can scarcely bear to think of it.

That is what you say? It seems too you know, accursed remembrance! that I was accused of this crime?

I was silent.

Well, sir. You know too perhaps that, from the hour the crime was committed,—yes, sir, that was the date [and, as he said this, there was somewhat frightful, I had almost said diabolical, in his countenance]—I have not had an hour's peace; I became changed from the happiest into the most miserable thing that lives; sleep has fled from my eyes; joy has been a stranger to my thoughts; and annihilation I should prefer a thousand times to the being that I lead. As soon as I was capable of a choice, I

chose honour and the esteem of mankind as a good I preferred to all others. You know, it seems, in how many ways my ambition has been disappointed,—I do not thank Collins for having been the historian of my disgrace,—would to God that night could be blotted from the memory of man!—But the scene of that night, instead of perishing, has been a source of ever new calamity to me, which must flow for ever! Am I then, thus miserable and ruined, a proper subject upon which for you to exercise your ingenuity, and improve your power of tormenting? Was it not enough that I was publicly dishonoured? that I was deprived, by the pestilential influence of some demon, of the opportunit of avenging my dishonour? No: in addition to this, I have been charged with having in this critical moment intercepted my own vengeance by the foulest of crimes. That trial is past. Misery

itself has nothing worse in store for me, except what you have inflicted: the seeming to doubt of my innocence, which, after the fullest and most solemn examination, has been completely established. You have forced me to this explanation. You have extorted from me a confidence which I had no inclination to make. But it is a part of the misery of my situation, that I am at the mercy of every creature, however little, who feels himself inclined to sport with my distress. Be content. You have brought me low enough.

Oh, sir, I am not content; I cannot be content! I cannot bear to think what I have done. I shall never again be able to look in the face the best of masters and the best of men. I beg of you, sir, to turn me out of your service. Let me go and hide myself where I may never see you more.

Mr. Falkland's countenance had indi-

cated great severity through the whole of this conversation; but now it became more harsh and tempestuous than ever. How now, rascal! cried he. You want to leave me, do you? Who told you that I wished to part with you? But you cannot bear to live with such a miserable wretch as I am! You are not disposed to put up with the caprices of a man so dissatisfied and unjust!

Oh, sir! do not talk to me thus! Do with me any thing you will. Kill me if you please.

Kill you? [Volumes could not describe the emotions with which this echo of my words was given and received.]

Sir, I could die to serve you! I love you more than I can express. I worship you as a being of a superior nature. I am foolish, raw, inexperienced,—worse than any of these;—but never did a thought of disloyalty to your service enter into my heart.

Here our conversation ended; and the impression it made upon my youthful mind it is impossible to describe. I thought with astonishment, even with rapture, of the attention and kindness towards me I discovered in Mr. Falkland, through all the roughness of his manner. I could never enough wonder at finding myself, humble as I was by my birth, obscure as I had hitherto been, thus suddenly become of so much importance to the happiness of one of the most enlightened and accomplished men in England. But this consciousness attached me to my patron more eagerly than ever, and made me swear a thousand times, as I meditated upon my situation, that I would never prove unworthy of so generous a protector.

CHAP. IV.

Is it not unaccountable that, in the midst of all my increased veneration for my patron, the first tumult of my emotion was scarcely subsided, before the old question that had excited my conjectures recurred to my mind, Was he the murderer? It was a kind of fatal impulse that seemed destined to hurry me to my destruction. I did not wonder at the disturbance that was given to Mr. Falkland by any allusion, however distant, to this fatal affair. That was as completely accounted for from the consideration of his excessive sensibility in matters of honour, as it would have been upon the supposition of the most atrocious guilt. Knowing as he did, that such a charge had once been connected with his name, he would of course be perpetually uneasy, and suspect some

latent insinuation at every possible opportunity. He would doubt and fear, lest every man with whom he conversed, harboured the foulest suspicions against him. In my case he found that I was in possession of some information, more than he was aware of, without its being possible for him to decide to what it amounted, whether I had heard a just or unjust, a candid or calumniatory tale. He had also reason to suppose that I gave entertainment to thoughts derogatory to his honour, and that I did not form that favourable judgment, which the exquisite refinement of his ruling passion made indispensable to his peace. All these considerations would of course maintain in him a state of perpetual uneasiness. But, though I could find nothing that I could consider as justifying me in persisting in the shadow of a doubt, yet, as I have said, the uncertainty and restlessness of my contempla-

tions would by no means depart from me.

The fluctuating state of my mind produced a contention of opposite princiciples, that by turns usurped dominion over my conduct. Sometimes I was influenced by the most complete veneration for my master; I placed an unreserved confidence in his integrity and his virtue, and implicitly surrendered my understanding for him to set it to what point he pleased. At other times the confidence, which had before flowed with the most plenteous tide, began to ebb; I was, as I had already been, watchful, inquisitive, suspicious, full of a thousand conjectures as to the meaning of the most indifferent actions. Mr. Falkland, who was most painfully alive to every thing that related to his honour, saw these variations, and betrayed his consciousness of them now in one manner and now in another, frequently

before I was myself aware, sometimes almost before they existed. The situation of both was distressing; we were each of us a plague to the other; and I often wondered, that the forbearance and benignity of my master was not at length exhausted, and that he did not determine to thrust from him for ever so incessant an observer. There was indeed one eminent difference between his share in the transaction and mine. I had some consolation in the midst of my restlessness. Curiosity is a principle that carries its pleasures, as well as its pains, along with it. The mind is urged by a perpetual stimulus; it seems as if it were continually approaching to the end of its race; and, as the insatiable desire of satisfaction is its principle of conduct, so it promises itself in that satisfaction an unknown gratification, which seems as if it were capable of fully compensating any injuries that may be suffered in

the career. But to Mr. Falkland there was no consolation. What he endured in the intercourse between us appeared to be gratuitous evil. He had only to wish that there was no such person as myself in the world, and to curse the hour, when his humanity led him to rescue me from my obscurity, and place me in his service.

A consequence produced upon me by the extraordinary nature of my situation it is necessary to mention. The constant state of vigilance and suspicion in which my mind was retained, worked a very rapid change in my character. It seemed to have all the effect that might have been expected, from years of observation and experience. The strictness with which I endeavoured to remark what passed in the mind of one man, and the variety of conjectures into which I was led, appeared as it were to render me a competent adept in the different modes in which the

human intellect displays its secret workings. I no longer said to myself, as I had done in the beginning, "I will ask Mr. Falkland whether he were the murderer." On the contrary, after having carefully examined the different kinds of evidence of which the subject was susceptible, and recollecting all that had already passed upon the subject, it was not without considerable pain, that I felt myself unable to discover any way in which I could be perfectly and unalterably satisfied of my patron's innocence. As to his guilt, I could scarcely bring myself to doubt that in some way or other, sooner or later, I should arrive at the knowledge of that, if it really existed. But I could not endure to think, almost for a moment, of that side of the alternative as true; and, with all my ungovernable suspicion arising from the mysteriousness of the circumstances, and all the delight which a young and unfledged

mind receives from ideas that give scope to all that imagination can picture of terrible or sublime, I could not yet bring myself to consider Mr. Falkland's guilt as a supposition attended with the remotest probability.

I hope the reader will forgive me for dwelling thus long on preliminary circumstances. I shall come soon enough to the story of my own misery. I have already said, that one of the motives which induced me to the penning of this narrative, was to console myself in my insupportable distress. I derive a melancholy pleasure from dwelling upon the circumstances which imperceptibly paved the way to my ruin. While I recollect or describe past scenes, which occurred in a more favourable period of my life, my attention is called off for a short interval, from the hopeless misfortune in which I am at present involved. The man must indeed possess an

uncommon portion of hardness of heart, who can envy me so slight a relief.—To proceed.

For some time after the explanation which had thus taken place between me and Mr. Falkland, his melancholy, instead of being in the slightest degree diminished by the lenient hand of time, went on perpetually to increase. His fits of insanity, for such I must denominate them for want of a distinct appellation, though it is possible they might not fall under the definition that either the faculty or the court of chancery appropriate to that term, became stronger and more durable than ever. It was no longer practicable wholly to conceal them from the family, and even from the neighbourhood. He would sometimes, without any previous notice, absent himself from his house for two or three days, unaccompanied by servant or attendant. This was the more

extraordinary, as it was well known that he paid no visits, nor kept up any sort of intercourse with the gentlemen of the vicinity. But it was impossible that a man of Mr. Falkland's distinction and fortune, should long continue in such a practice, without its being discovered what was become of him; though a considerable part of our county was among the wildest and most desolate districts that are to be found in South Britain. Mr. Falkland was sometimes seen climbing among the rocks, reclining motionless for hours together upon the edge of a precipice, or lulled into a kind of nameless lethargy of despair by the dashing of the torrents. He would remain for whole nights together under the naked cope of heaven, inattentive to the consideration either of place or time, insensible to the variations of the weather, or rather seeming to be delighted with that uproar of

the elements, which partially called off his attention from the discord and dejection that occupied his own mind.

At first, when we received intelligence at any time of the place to which Mr. Falkland had withdrawn himself, some person of his household, Mr. Collins or myself, but most generally myself, as I was always at home, and always in the received sense of the word at leisure, went to him to persuade him to return. But after a few experiments we thought it adviseable to desist, and leave him to prolong his absence, or to terminate it, as might happen to suit his own inclination. Mr. Collins, whose grey hairs and long services seemed to give him a sort of right to be importunate, sometimes succeeded; though even in that case there was nothing that could sit more uneasily upon Mr. Falkland, than this insinuation as if he wanted a guardian to take care of him, or as if he were in, or in danger of

falling into, a state in which he would be incapable of deliberately controlling his own words and actions. At one time he would sullenly yield to his humble, venerable friend, murmuring grievously at the constraint that was put upon him, but without spirit enough even to complain of it with energy. At another time, even though complying, he would suddenly burst out in a paroxysm of resentment. Upon these occasions there was something inconceivably, savagely, terrible in his anger, that gave to the person against whom it was directed, the most humiliating and insupportable sensations. Me he always treated at these times with fierceness, and drove me from him with a vehemence, lofty, emphatical and sustained, beyond any thing of which I should have thought human nature to be capable. These sallies seemed always to constitute a sort of crisis in his indisposition; and, whenever he was induced to

such a premature return, he would fall immediately after into a state of the most melancholy inactivity, in which he usually continued for two or three days. It was by an obstinate fatality that, whenever I saw Mr. Falkland in these deplorable situations, and particularly when I lighted upon him after having sought him among the rocks and precipices, pale, emaciated, solitary and haggard, the suggestion would continually recur to me, in spite of inclination, in spite of persuasion, and in spite of evidence, Surely this man is a murderer!

CHAP. V.

IT was in one of the lucid intervals, as I may term them, that occurred during this period, that a peasant was brought before him, in his character of a justice of peace, upon an accusation of having murdered his fellow. As Mr. Falkland had by this time acquired the repute of a melancholy valetudinarian, it is probable he would not have been called upon to act in his official character upon the present occasion, had it not been that two or three of the neighbouring justices were all of them from home at once, so that he was the only one to be found in a circuit of many miles. The reader however must not imagine, though I have employed the word insanity in describing Mr. Falkland's symptoms, that he was by

any means reckoned for a madman by the generality of those who had occasion to observe him. It is true that his behaviour at certain times was singular and unaccountable; but then at other times there was in it so much dignity, regularity and economy; he knew so well how to command and make himself respected; his actions and carriage were so condescending, considerate and benevolent; that, far from having forfeited the esteem of the unfortunate or the many, they were loud and earnest in his praises.

I was present at the examination of this peasant. The moment I heard of the errand which had brought this rabble of visitors, a sudden thought struck me. I conceived the possibility of rendering the incident subordinate to the great enquiry which drank up all the currents of my soul. I said, This man is arraigned of murder, and murder is the master-key that wakes distemper in the mind of Mr.

Falkland. I will watch him without remission. I will trace all the mazes of his thought. Surely at such a time his secret anguish must betray itself. Surely, if it be not my own fault, I shall now be able to discover the state of his plea before the tribunal of unerring justice.

I took my station in a manner most favourable to the object upon which my mind was intent. I could perceive in Mr. Falkland's features as he entered, a strong reluctance to the business in which he was engaged; but there was no possibility of retreating. His countenance was embarrassed and anxious; he scarcely saw any body. The examination had not proceeded far, before he chanced to turn his eye to the part of the room where I was. It happened in this, as in some preceding instances: we exchanged a silent look by which we told volumes to each other. Mr. Falkland's complexion turned from red to pale, and from pale

to red. I perfectly understood his feelings, and would willingly have withdrawn myself. But it was impossible; my passions were too deeply engaged; I was rooted to the spot; though my own life, that of my master, or almost of a whole nation had been at stake, I had no power to change my position.

The first surprise however having subsided, Mr. Falkland assumed a look of determined constancy, and even seemed to increase in self-possession much beyond what could have been expected from his first entrance. This he could probably have maintained, had it not been that the scene, instead of being permanent, was in some sort perpetually changing. The man who was brought before him, was vehemently accused by the brother of the deceased, as having acted from the most rooted malice. He swore that there had been an old grudge between the parties, and related several instances of it. He

affirmed that the murderer had sought the earliest opportunity of wreaking his revenge, had struck the first blow, and, though the contest was in appearance only a common boxing match, had watched the occasion of giving a fatal stroke, which was followed by the instant death of his antagonist.

While the accuser was giving in his evidence, the accused discovered every token of the most poignant sensibility. At one time his features were convulsed with anguish, tears unbidden trickled down his manly cheeks; and at another he started with apparent astonishment at the unfavourable turn that was given to the narrative, though without betraying any impatience to interrupt. I never saw a man less ferocious in his appearance. He was tall, well made, and comely. His countenance was ingenuous and benevolent, without folly. By his side stood a young woman, his sweetheart, extremely

agreeable in her person, and her looks testifying how deeply she interested herself in the fate of her lover. The accidental spectators were divided, between indignation against the enormity of the supposed criminal, and compassion for the poor girl that accompanied him. They seemed to take little notice of the favourable appearances visible in the person of the accused, till in the sequel those appearances were more forcibly suggested to their attention. For Mr. Falkland, he was at one moment engrossed by curiosity and earnestness to investigate the tale, while at another he betrayed a sort of revulsion of sentiment which made the investigation too painful for him to support.

When the accused was called upon for his defence, he readily owned the misunderstanding that had existed, and that the deceased was the worst enemy he had in the world. Indeed he was his only ene-

my, and he could not tell the reason that had made him so. He had employed every effort to overcome his animosity, but in vain. The deceased had upon all occasions sought to mortify him, and do him an ill turn; but he had resolved never to be engaged in a broil with him, and, till this day, he had succeeded. If he had met with a misfortune with any other man, people at least might have thought it accident; but now it would always be believed that he had acted from secret malice and a bad heart.

The fact was, that he and his sweetheart had gone to a neighbouring fair, where this man had met them. The man had often tried to affront him; and his passiveness, interpreted into cowardice, had perhaps encouraged the other to additional rudeness. Finding that he had endured trivial insults to himself with an even temper, the deceased now thought proper to turn his brutality upon the young woman

that accompanied him. He pursued them; he endeavoured in various manners to harass and vex them; they had sought in vain to shake him off. The young woman was considerably terrified. The accused expostulated with their persecutor, and asked him how he could be so barbarous as to persist in frightening a woman? He replied with an insulting tone, Then the woman should find some one able to protect her; people that encouraged and trusted to such a thief as that, deserved no better! The accused tried every expedient he could invent; at length he could endure it no longer; he became exasperated, and challenged the assailant. The challenge was accepted; a ring was formed; he confided the care of his sweetheart to a bystander; and unfortunately the first blow he struck proved fatal.

The accused added, that he did not care what became of him. He had been

anxious to go through the world in an inoffensive manner, and now he had the guilt of blood upon him. He did not know but it would be a kindness in them to hang him out of the way; for his conscience would reproach him as long as he lived, and the figure of the deceased, as he had lain senseless and without motion at his feet, would perpetually haunt him. The thought of this man, at one moment full of life and vigour, and the next lifted a helpless corpse from the ground, and all owing to him, was a thought too dreadful to be endured. He had loved the poor maiden who had been the innocent occasion of this, with all his heart, but from this time he should never support the sight of her. The sight would bring a tribe of fiends in its rear. One unlucky minute had poisoned all his hopes, and made life a burden to him.—Saying this his countenance fell, the muscles of his

face trembled with agony, and he looked the statue of despair.

This was the story of which Mr. Falkland was called upon to be the auditor. Though the incidents were, for the most part, wide of those which belonged to the adventures of the preceding volume, and there had been much less policy and skill displayed on either part in this rustic encounter, yet there were many points which, to a man who bore the former strongly in his recollection, suggested a sufficient resemblance. In each case it was a human brute persisting in a course of hostility to a man of benevolent character, and suddenly and terribly cut off in the midst of his career. These points perpetually smote upon the heart of Mr. Falkland. He at one time started with astonishment, and at another shifted his posture, like a man who is unable longer to endure the sensations that press upon him. Then he new strung his nerves to

stubborn patience. I could see, while his muscles preserved an inflexible steadiness, tears of anguish roll down his cheeks. He dared not trust his eyes to glance towards the side of the room where I stood; and this gave an air of embarrassment to his whole figure. But, when the accused came to speak of his own feelings, to describe the depth of his compunction for an involuntary fault, he could endure it no longer. He suddenly rose, and with every mark of horror and despair rushed out of the room.

This circumstance made no material difference in the affair of the accused. The parties were detained about half an hour. Mr. Falkland had already heard the material parts of the evidence in person. At the expiration of that interval, he sent for Mr. Collins out of the room. The story of the culprit was confirmed by many witnesses who had seen the transaction. Word was brought that my

master was indisposed, and at the same time the accused was ordered to be discharged. The vengeance of the brother however, as I afterwards found, did not rest here, and he met with a magistrate more scrupulous or more despotic, by whom the culprit was committed for trial.

This affair was no sooner concluded than I hastened into the garden, and plunged into the deepest of its thickets. My mind was full almost to bursting. I no sooner conceived myself sufficiently removed from all observation, than my thoughts forced their way spontaneously to my tongue, and I exclaimed in a fit of uncontrolable enthusiasm: "This is the murderer! the Hawkinses were innocent! I am sure of it! I will pledge my life for it! It is out! It is discovered! Guilty upon my soul!"

While I thus proceeded with hasty steps along the most secret paths of the garden, and from time to time gave vent

to the tumult of my thoughts in involuntary exclamations, I felt as if my animal system had undergone a total revolution. My blood boiled within me. I was conscious to a kind of rapture for which I could not account. I was solemn, yet full of rapid emotion, burning with indignation and energy. In the very tempest and hurricane of the passions, I seemed to enjoy the most soul-ravishing calm. I cannot better express the then state of my mind, than by saying, I was never so perfectly alive as at that moment.

This state of mental elevation continued for several hours, but at length subsided and gave place to more deliberate reflection. One of the first questions that then occurred was, What shall I do with the knowledge I have been so eager to acquire? I had no inclination to turn informer. I felt, what I had had no previous conception of, that it was pos-

sible to love a murderer, and, as I then understood it, the worst of murderers. I conceived it to be in the highest degree absurd and iniquitous, to cut off a man qualified for the most essential and extensive utility, merely out of retrospect to an act which, whatever were its merits, could not now be retrieved.

This thought led me to another which had at first passed unnoticed. If I had been disposed to turn informer, what had occurred amounted to no evidence that was admissible in a court of justice. Well then, added I, if it be such as would not be admitted at a criminal tribunal, am I sure it is such as I ought to admit? There were twenty persons beside myself, present at the scene from which I pretend to derive such entire conviction. Not one of them saw it in the light that I did. It either appeared to them a casual and unimportant circumstance, or they thought it sufficiently accounted for by Mr. Falk-

land's infirmity and misfortunes. Did it really contain such an extent of arguments and application, that nobody but I was discerning enough to see?

But all this reasoning produced no alteration in my way of thinking. For this time I could not get it out of my mind for a moment: "Mr. Falkland is the murderer! He is guilty! I see it! I feel it! I am sure of it!" Thus was I hurried along by an uncontrolable destiny. The state of my passions in their progressive career, the inquisitiveness and impatience of my thoughts, appeared to make this determination unavoidable.

An incident occurred while I was in the garden, that seemed to make no impression upon me at the time, but which I recollected when my thoughts were got into somewhat of a slower motion. In the midst of one of my paroxysms of exclamation, and when I thought myself most alone, the shadow of a man as avoiding

me passed transiently by me at a small distance. Though I had scarcely caught a faint glimpse of his person, there was something in the occurrence that persuaded me it was Mr. Falkland. I shuddered at the possibility of his having overheard the words of my soliloquy. But this idea, alarming as it was, had not power immediately to suspend the career of my reflections. Subsequent circumstances however brought back the apprehension to my mind. I had scarcely a doubt of its reality, when dinner-time came, and Mr. Falkland was not to be found. Supper and bed-time passed in the same manner. The only conclusion made by his servants upon this circumstance was, that he was gone upon one of his accustomed melancholy rambles.

CHAP. VI.

The period at which my story is now arrived, seemed as if it were the very crisis of the fortune of Mr. Falkland. Incident followed upon incident in a kind of breathless succession. About nine o'clock the next morning an alarm was given, that one of the chimneys of the house was on fire. No accident could be apparently more trivial; but presently it blazed with such fury, as to make it clear that some beam of the house, which in the first building had been improperly placed, had been reached by the flames. Some danger was apprehended for the whole edifice. The confusion was the greater, in consequence of the absence of the master, as well as of Mr. Collins, the steward. While some of the domestics were em-

ployed in endeavouring to extinguish the flames, it was thought proper that others should busy themselves, in removing the most valuable moveables to a lawn in the garden. I took some command in the affair, to which indeed my station in the family seemed to entitle me, and for which I was judged qualified by my understanding and mental resources.

Having given some general directions, I conceived that it was not enough to stand by and superintend, but that I should contribute my personal labour in the public concern. I set out for that purpose; and my steps, by some mysterious fatality, were directed to the private apartment at the end of the library. Here, as I looked round, my eye was suddenly caught by the trunk mentioned in the first pages of my narrative.

My mind was already raised to its utmost pitch. In a window-seat of the room lay a number of chisels and other

carpenter's tools. I know not what infatuation instantaneously seized me. The idea was too powerful to be resisted. I forgot the business upon which I came, the employment of the servants, and the urgency of general danger. I should have done the same, if the flames that seemed to extend as they proceeded, and already surmounted the house, had reached this very apartment. I snatched a tool suitable for the purpose, threw myself upon the ground, and applied with eagerness to a magazine which inclosed all for which my heart panted. After two or three efforts, in which the energy of uncontrolable passion was added to my bodily strength, the fastenings gave way, the trunk opened, and all that I sought was at once within my reach.

I was in the act of lifting up the lid, when Mr. Falkland entered, wild, breathless, distraction in his looks! He had been brought home from a considerable distance

by the sight of the flames. At the moment of his appearance the lid dropped down from my hand. He no sooner saw me, than his eyes emitted sparks of rage. He ran with eagerness to a brace of loaded pistols which hung in the room, and, seizing one, presented it to my head. I saw his design, and sprang to avoid it; but, with the same rapidity with which he had formed his resolution, he changed it, and instantly went to the window, and flung the pistol into the court below. He bade me be gone with his usual irresistible energy; and, overcome as I was already by the horror of the detection, I eagerly complied.

A moment after a considerable part of the chimney tumbled with noise into the court below, and a voice exclaimed that the fire was more violent than ever. These circumstances seemed to produce a mechanical effect upon my patron, who, having first locked the closet, appeared on

the outside of the house, ascended the roof, and was in a moment in every place where his presence was required. The flames were at length extinguished.

The reader can with difficulty form a conception of the state to which I was now reduced. My act was in some sort an act of insanity; but how undescribable are the feelings with which I looked back upon it! It was an instantaneous impulse, a short-lived and passing alienation of mind; but what must Mr. Falkland think of that alienation? To any man a person, who had once shown himself capable of so wild a flight of the mind, must appear dangerous; how must he appear to a man under Mr. Falkland's circumstances? I had just had a pistol held to my head, by a man resolved to put a period to my existence. That indeed was past; but what was it that fate had yet in reserve for me! The insatiable vengeance of a Falkland, of a man whose hands were to my appre-

hension red with blood, and his thoughts familiar with cruelty and murder. How great were the resources of his mind, resources henceforth to be confederated for my destruction! This was the termination of an ungoverned curiosity, an impulse that I had represented to myself as so innocent or so venial.

In the high tide of boiling passion I had overlooked all consequences. It now appeared to me like a dream. Is it in man to leap from the high-raised precipice, or rush unconcerned into the midst of flames? Was it possible I could have forgotten for a moment the awe-creating manners of Falkland, and the inexorable fury I should awake in his soul? No thought of future security had reached my mind. I had acted upon no plan. I had conceived no means of concealing my deed, after it had once been effected. But it was over now. One short minute had effected a reverse in my situation, the suddenness of

which the history of man perhaps is unable to surpass.

I have always been at a loss to account for my having plunged thus headlong, into an act so monstrous. There is something in it of unexplained and involuntary sympathy. One sentiment flows by necessity of nature, into another sentiment of the same general character. This was the first instance in which I had witnessed a danger by fire. All was confusion around me, and all changed into hurricane within. The general situation, to my unpractised apprehension, appeared desperate, and I by contagion became alike desperate. At first I had been in some degree calm and collected, but that too was a desperate effort, and when it gave way, a kind of instant insanity became its successor.

I had now every thing to fear. And yet what was my fault? It proceeded from none of those errors which are justly

held up to the aversion of mankind; my object had been neither wealth, nor the means of indulgence, nor the usurpation of power. No spark of malignity had harboured in my soul. I had always reverenced the sublime mind of Mr. Falkland; I reverenced it still. My offence had merely been a mistaken thirst of knowledge. Such however it was, as to admit neither of forgiveness nor remission. This epoch was the crisis of my fate, dividing what may be called the offensive part, from the defensive which has been the sole business of my remaining years. Alas, my offence was short, not aggravated by any sinister intention: but the reprisals I was to suffer, are long, and can terminate only with my life!

In the state in which I found myself when the recollection of what I had done flowed back upon my mind, I was incapable of any resolution. All was chaos

and uncertainty within me. My thoughts were too full of horror to be susceptible of activity. I felt deserted of my intellectual powers, palsied in mind, and compelled to sit in speechless expectation of the misery to which I was destined. To my own conception I was like a man, who, though blasted with lightning, and deprived for ever of the power of motion, should yet retain the consciousness of his situation. Death-dealing despair was the only idea of which I was sensible.

I was still in this situation of mind when Mr. Falkland sent for me. His message roused me from my trance. In recovering I felt those sickening and loathsome sensations, which a man may be supposed at first to endure who should return from the sleep of death. Gradually I recovered the power of arranging my ideas and directing my steps.

I understood that, the minute the affair of the fire was over, Mr. Falkland had retired to his own room. It was evening before he ordered me to be called.

I found in him every token of extreme distress, except that there was an air of solemn and sad composure that crowned the whole. For the present all appearance of gloom, stateliness, and austerity was gone. As I entered, he looked up, and seeing who it was, ordered me to bolt the door. I obeyed. He went round the room, and examined its other avenues. He then returned to where I was. I trembled in every joint of my frame. I exclaimed within myself, "What scene of death has Roscius now "to act?"

Williams, said he, in a tone that had more in it of sorrow than resentment, I have attempted your life! I am a wretch devoted to the scorn and exe-

cration of mankind!—There he stopped.

If there be one being on the whole earth, that feels the scorn and execration due to such a wretch more strongly than another, it is myself. I have been kept in a state of perpetual torture and madness. But I can put an end to it and its consequences; and, so far at least as relates to you, I am determined to do it. I know the price, and——I will make the purchase.

You must swear, said he. You must attest every sacrament, divine and human, never to disclose what I am now to tell you.—He dictated the oath, and I repeated it with an aching heart. I had no power to offer a word of remark.

This confidence, said he, is of your seeking, not of mine. It is odious to me, as it is dangerous to you.

Having thus prefaced the disclosure he had to make, he paused. He seemed

to collect himself as for an effort of magnitude. He wiped his face with his handkerchief. The moisture that incommoded him, appeared not to be tears, but sweat.

Look at me. Observe me. Is it not strange that such a one as I should retain lineaments of a human creature? I am the blackest of villains. I am the murderer of Tyrrel. I am the assassin of the Hawkinses.

I started with terror, but was silent.

What a story is mine! Insulted, disgraced, polluted in the face of hundreds, I was capable of any act of desperation. I watched my opportunity, followed Mr. Tyrrel from the rooms, seized a sharp-pointed knife that fell in my way, came behind him, and stabbed him to the heart. My gigantic oppressor rolled at my feet.

All are but links of one chain. A blow!

A murder! My next business was to defend myself, to tell so well digested a lie, as that all mankind should believe it true. Never was a task so harrowing and intolerable!

Well: thus far fortune favoured me. She favoured me beyond my desire. The guilt was removed from me, and cast upon another; but this I was to endure. Whence came the circumstantial evidence against him, the broken knife and the blood, I am unable to tell. I suppose, by some miraculous accident, Hawkins was passing by, and endeavoured to assist his oppressor in the agonies of death. You have heard his story; you have read one of his letters. But you do not know the thousandth part of the proofs of his simple and unalterable rectitude that I have known. His son suffered with him, that son for the sake of whose happiness and virtue he

ruined himself, and would have died a hundred times.——I have had feelings, but I cannot describe them.

This it is to be a gentleman! a man of honour! I was the fool of fame. My virtue, my honesty, my everlasting peace of mind, were cheap sacrifices to be made at the shrine of this divinity. But, what is worse, there is nothing that has happened, that has in any degree contributed to my cure. I am as much the fool of fame as ever. I cling to it to my last breath. Though I be the blackest of villains, I will leave behind me a spotless and illustrious name. There is no crime so malignant, no scene of blood so horrible, in which that object cannot engage me. It is no matter that I regard these things at a distance with aversion;——I am sure of it; bring me to the test, and I shall yield. I despise myself; but thus I am; things are gone too far to be recalled.

Why is it that I am compelled to this confidence? From the love of fame. I should tremble at the sight of every pistol, or instrument of death that offered itself to my hands; and perhaps my next murder may not be so fortunate as those I have already committed. I had no alternative but to make you my confident or my victim. It was better to trust you with the whole truth under every seal of secrecy, than to live in perpetual fear of your penetration or your rashness.

Do you know what it is you have done? To gratify a foolishly inquisitive humour you have sold yourself. You shall continue in my service, but can never share in my affection. I will benefit you in respect of fortune, but I shall always hate you. If ever an unguarded word escape from your lips, if ever you excite my jealousy or suspicion, expect to pay for it by your death or worse. It is a dear bargain you have

made. But it is too late to look back. I charge and adjure you by every thing that is sacred and that is tremendous, preserve your faith!

My tongue has now for the first time for several years spoken the language of my heart; and the intercourse from this hour shall be shut for ever. I want no pity. I desire no consolation. Surrounded as I am with horrors, I will at least preserve my fortitude to the last. If I had been reserved to a different destiny, I have qualities in that respect worthy of a better cause. I can be mad, miserable and frantic, but even in frenzy I can preserve my presence of mind and discretion.

Such was the story I had been so desirous to know. Though my mind had brooded upon the subject for months, there was not a syllable of it that did not come to my ear with the most per-

fect sense of novelty. Mr. Falkland is a murderer! said I, as I retired from the conference. This dreadful appellative "a murderer," made my very blood run cold within me. He killed Mr. Tyrrel, for he could not control his resentment and anger: he sacrificed Hawkins the elder and Hawkins the younger, because he could upon no terms endure the public loss of honour: how can I expect that a man thus passionate and unrelenting will not sooner or later make me his victim?

But, notwithstanding this terrible application of the story, an application to which perhaps in some form or other mankind are indebted for nine tenths of their abhorrence against vice, I could not help occasionally recurring to reflections of an opposite nature. Mr. Falkland is a murderer! resumed I. He might yet be a most excellent man, if he did but think so. It is the thinking

ourselves vicious then, that principally contributes to make us vicious?

Amidst the shock I received from finding, what I had never suffered myself constantly to believe, that my suspicions were true; I still discovered new cause of admiration for my master. His menaces indeed were terrible. But, when I recollected the offence I had given, so contrary to every received principle of civilised society, so insolent and rude, so intolerable to a man of Mr. Falkland's elevation and in Mr. Falkland's peculiarity of circumstances, I was astonished at his forbearance. There were indeed sufficiently obvious reasons why he might not choose to proceed to extremities with me. But how different from the fearful expectations I had conceived, were the calmness of his behaviour, and the regulated mildness of his language! In this respect, I for a short time imagined that I was emanci-

pated from the mischiefs which had appalled me, and that, in having to do with a man of Mr. Falkland's liberality, I had nothing rigorous to apprehend.

It is a miserable prospect, said I, that he holds up to me. He imagines that I am restrained by no principles, and deaf to the claims of personal excellence. But he shall find himself mistaken. I will never become an informer. I will never injure my patron; and therefore he will not be my enemy. With all his misfortunes and all his errors, I feel that my soul yearns for his welfare. If he have been criminal, that is owing to circumstances; the same qualities under other circumstances would have been, or rather were, sublimely beneficent.

My reasonings were no doubt infinitely more favourable to Mr. Falkland, than those which human beings are accustomed to make, in the case of such as they style great criminals. This will not

be wondered at, when it is considered that I had myself just been trampling on the established boundaries of obligation, and therefore might well have a fellow feeling for other offenders. Add to which, I had known Mr. Falkland from the first as a beneficent divinity. I had observed at leisure, and with a minuteness which could not deceive me, the excellent qualities of his heart, and I found him possessed of a mind beyond comparison the most fertile and accomplished I had ever known.

But, though the terrors which had impressed me were considerably alleviated, my situation was notwithstanding sufficiently miserable. The ease and light-heartedness of my youth were for ever gone. The voice of an irresistible necessity had commanded me to "sleep no more." I was tormented with a secret of which I must never disburthen myself; and this consciousness was at my

age a source of perpetual melancholy. I had made myself a prisoner, in the most intolerable sense of that term, for years, perhaps for the rest of my life. Though my prudence and discretion should be invariable, I must remember that I should have an overseer, vigilant from conscious guilt, full of resentment at the unjustifiable means by which I had extorted from him a confession, and whose lightest caprice might at any time decide upon every thing that was dear to me. The vigilance even of a public and systematical despotism is poor, compared with a vigilance which is thus goaded by the most anxious passions of the soul. Against this species of persecution I knew not how to invent a refuge. I dared neither fly from the observation of Mr. Falkland, nor continue exposed to its operation. I was at first indeed lulled in a certain degree to security upon the verge of the precipice. But it

was not long before I found a thousand circumstances perpetually reminding me of my true situation. Those I am now to relate are among the most memorable.

CHAP. VII.

In no long time after the disclosure Mr. Falkland had made, Mr. Forester, his elder brother by the mother's side, came to reside for a short period in our family. This was a circumstance peculiarly adverse to my patron's habits and inclinations. He had broken off, as I have already said, all intercourse of visiting with his neighbours. He debarred himself every kind of amusement and relaxation. He shrunk from the society of his fellows, and thought he could never be sufficiently buried in obscurity and solitude. This principle was, in most cases, of no difficult execution, to a man of firmness. But Mr. Falkland knew not how to avoid the visit of Mr. Forester. This gentleman was just returned from a residence of several years

upon the continent, and his demand of an apartment in the house of his half-brother, till his own house at the distance of thirty miles should be prepared for his reception, was made with an air of confidence that scarcely admitted of a refusal. Mr. Falkland could only allege that the state of his health and spirits was such, that he feared a residence at his house would be little agreeable to his kinsman; and Mr. Forester conceived that this was a disqualification which would always augment in proportion as it was tolerated, and hoped that his society, by inducing Mr. Falkland to suspend his habits of seclusion, would be the means of essential benefit. Mr. Falkland opposed him no further. He would have been sorry to be thought unkind to a kinsman for whom he had a particular esteem; and the consciousness of not daring to assign the true reason,

made him cautious of adhering to his objection.

The character of Mr. Forester was in many respects the reverse of that of my master. His very appearance indicated the singularity of his disposition. His figure was short and angular. His eyes were sunk far into his head, and were overhung with eye-brows black, thick and bushy. His complexion was swarthy, and his lineaments hard. He had seen much of the world; but, to judge of him from his appearance and manners, one would have thought that he had never moved from his fire-side.

His temper was acid, petulant and harsh. He was easily offended by trifles, respecting which, previously to the offence, the persons with whom he had intercourse, could have no suspicion of such a result. When offended, his customary behaviour was exceedingly rug-

ged. He thought only of setting the delinquent right, and humbling him for his error; and, in his eagerness to do this, overlooked the sensibility of the sufferer, and the pains he inflicted. Remonstrance in such a case he regarded as the offspring of cowardice, which was to be extirpated with a steady and unshrinking hand, and not soothed with misjudging kindness and indulgence. As is usual in human character, he had formed a system of thinking to suit the current of his feelings. He held that the kindness we entertain for a man, should be veiled and concealed, exerted in substantial benefits, but not disclosed, lest an undue advantage should be taken of it by its object.

With this rugged outside, Mr. Forester had a warm and generous heart. At first sight all men were deterred by his manner, and excited to give him an ill character. But the longer any one knew

him, the more they approved him. His harshness was then only considered as habit; and strong sense and active benevolence were uppermost in the recollection of his familiar acquaintance. His conversation, when he condescended to lay aside his snappish, rude and abrupt half-sentences, became flowing in diction, and uncommonly amusing with regard to its substance. He combined with weightiness of expression, a dryness of characteristic humour, that demonstrated at once the vividness of his observation, and the force of his understanding.

The peculiarities of this gentleman's character were not undisplayed in the scene to which he was now introduced. Having much kindness in his disposition, he soon became deeply interested in the unhappiness of his relation. He did every thing in his power to remove it; but his attempts were rude and unskilful. With a mind so accomplished,

and a spirit so susceptible as that of Mr. Falkland, Mr. Forester did not venture to let loose his usual violence of manner. But, if he carefully abstained from harshness, he was however wholly incapable of that sweet and liquid eloquence of the soul, which would perhaps have stood the fairest chance, of seducing Mr. Falkland for a moment to forget his anguish. He exhorted his host to rouse up his spirit, and defy the foul fiend; but the tone of his exhortations found no sympathetic chord in the mind of my patron. He had not the skill to carry conviction to an understanding so well fortified in error. In a word, after a thousand efforts of kindness to his entertainer, he drew off his forces, growling and dissatisfied with his own impotence, rather than angry at the obstinacy of Mr. Falkland. He felt no diminution of his affection for him, and was sincerely grieved to find that he was so

little capable of serving him. Both parties in this case did justice to the merits of the other; at the same time that the disparity of their humours was such, as to prevent the stranger from being in any degree a dangerous companion to the master of the house. They had scarcely one point of contact in their characters; Mr. Forester was incapable of giving Mr. Falkland that degree either of pain or pleasure, which can raise the soul into a tumult, and deprive it for a while of tranquillity and self-command.

Our visitor was a man, notwithstanding appearances, of a peculiarly sociable disposition, and, where he was neither interrupted nor contradicted, considerably loquacious. He began to feel himself painfully out of his element upon the present occasion. Mr. Falkland was devoted to contemplation and solitude. He put upon himself some degree of re-

straint upon the arrival of his kinsman, though even then his darling habits would break out. But, when they had see each other a certain number of times, and it was sufficiently evident that the society of either would be a burthen rather than a pleasure to the other, they consented, by a sort of silent compact, that each should be at liberty to follow his own inclination. Mr. Falkland was in a sense the greatest gainer by this. He returned to the habits of his choice, and acted, as nearly as possible, just as he would have done if Mr. Forester had not been in existence. But the latter was wholly at a loss. He had all the disadvantages of retirement, without being able, as he might have done at his house, to bring his own associates or his own amusements about him.

In this situation he cast his eyes upon me. It was his principle to do every thing that his thoughts suggested, without

caring for the forms of the world. He saw no reason why a peasant, with certain advantages of education and opportunity, might not be as eligible a companion as a lord; at the same time that he was deeply impressed with the venerableness of old institutions. Reduced as he was to a kind of last resort, he found me better qualified for his purpose than any other of Mr. Falkland's houshold.

The manner in which he began this sort of correspondence was sufficiently characteristical. It was abrupt; but it was strongly stamped with essential benevolence. It was blunt and humorous; but there was attractiveness, especially in a case of unequal intercourse, in that very rusticity by which he levelled himself with the mass of his species. He had to reconcile himself, as well as to invite me; not to reconcile himself to the postponing an aristocratical vanity,

for of that he had a very slender portion, but to the trouble of invitation, for he loved his ease. All this produced some irregularity and indecision in his own mind, and gave a whimsical impression to his behaviour.

On my part I was by no means ungrateful for the distinction that was paid me. My mind had been relaxed into temporary dejection, but my reserve had no alloy of moroseness or insensibility. It did not long hold out against the condescending attentions of Mr. Forester. I became gradually heedful, encouraged, confiding. I had a most eager thirst for the knowledge of mankind; and, though no person perhaps ever purchased so dearly the instructions he received in that school, the inclination was in no degree diminished. Mr. Forester was the second man I had seen uncommonly worthy of my analysis, and who seemed to my thoughts, arrived as I was at the

end of my first essay, almost as much deserving to be studied as Mr. Falkland himself. I was glad to escape from the uneasiness of my reflections; and, while engaged with this new friend, I forgot the criticalness of the evils with which I was hourly menaced.

Stimulated by these feelings, I was what Mr. Forester wanted, a diligent and zealous hearer. I was strongly susceptible of impression; and the alternate impressions my mind received, visibly displayed themselves in my countenance and gestures. The observations Mr. Forester had made in his travels, the set of opinions he had formed, all amused and interested me. His manner of telling a story, or explaining his thoughts, was forcible, perspicuous and original: his style in conversation had an uncommon zest. Every thing he had to relate, delighted me; while in return my sympathy, my eager curiosity, and my unsophisticated

passions, rendered me to Mr. Forester a most desirable hearer. It is not to be wondered at therefore, that every day rendered our intercourse more intimate and cordial.

Mr. Falkland was destined to be for ever unhappy; and it seemed as if no new incident could occur, from which he was not able to extract food for this imperious propensity. He was wearied with a perpetual repetition of similar impressions; and entertained an invincible disgust against all that was new. The visit of Mr. Forester he regarded with antipathy. He was scarcely able to look at him without shuddering; an emotion which his guest perceived, and pitied as the result of habit and disease, rather than of judgment. None of his actions passed unremarked; the most indifferent excited uneasiness and apprehension. The first overtures of intimacy between me and Mr. Forester, probably

gave birth to sentiments of jealousy in the mind of my master. The irregular, variable character of his visitor, tended to heighten them by producing an appearance of inexplicableness and mystery. At this time he intimated to me that it was not agreeable to him, that there should be much intercourse between me and this gentleman.

What could I do? Young as I was, could it be expected that I should play the philosopher, and put a perpetual curb upon my inclinations? Imprudent though I had been, could I voluntarily subject myself to an eternal penance, and estrangement from human society? Could I discourage a frankness so perfectly in consonance with my wishes, and receive in an ungracious way a kindness that stole away my heart?

Beside this, I was but ill prepared for the servile submission Mr. Falkland demanded. In early life I was accustomed

to be much my own master. When I first entered into Mr. Falkland's service, my personal habits were checked by the novelty of my situation, and my affections were gained by the high accomplishments of my patron. To novelty and its influence, curiosity had succeeded. Curiosity, so long as it lasted, was a principle stronger in my bosom than even the love of independence. To that I would have sacrificed my liberty or my life; to gratify it, I would have submitted to the condition of a West Indian Negro, or to the tortures inflicted by North American savages. But the turbulence of curiosity had now subsided.

As long as the threats of Mr. Falkland had been confined to generals, I endured it. I was conscious of the unbecoming action I had committed, and this rendered me humble. But, when he went further, and undertook to prescribe to every article of my conduct,

my patience was at an end. My mind, before sufficiently sensible to the unfortunate situation to which my imprudence had reduced me, now took a nearer and a more alarming view of the circumstances of the case. Mr. Falkland was not an old man; he had in him the principles of vigour, however they might seem to be shaken; he might live as long as I should. I was his prisoner; and what a prisoner? All my actions observed; all my gestures marked. I could move neither to the right nor the left, but the eye of my keeper was upon me. He watched me; and his vigilance was a sickness to my heart. For me there was no more of freedom, no more of hilarity, of thoughtlessness, or of youth. Was this the life, upon which I had entered with such warm and sanguine expectation? Were my days to be wasted in this cheerless gloom; a galley-slave in the hands of the system of nature, whom

death only, the death of myself or my inexorable superior, could free?

I had been adventurous in the gratification of an infantine and unreasonable curiosity, and I was resolved not to be less adventurous, if need were, in the defence of every thing that can make life a blessing. I was prepared for an amicable adjustment of interests; I would undertake that Mr. Falkland should never sustain injury through my means; but I expected in return that I should suffer no incroachment, but be left to the direction of my own understanding.

I went on then to seek Mr. Forester's society with eagerness; and it is the nature of an intimacy that does not decline, progressively to increase. Mr. Falkland observed these symptoms with visible perturbation. Whenever I was conscious of their being perceived by him, I betrayed tokens of confusion; this

did not tend to allay his uneasiness. One day he spoke to me alone; and, with a look of mysterious, but terrible import, expressed himself thus:

Young man, take warning! Perhaps this is the last time you shall have an opportunity to take it! I will not always be the butt of your simplicity and inexperience, nor suffer your weakness to triumph over my strength! Why do you trifle with me? You little suspect the extent of my power. At this moment you are inclosed with the snares of my vengeance unseen by you, and, at the instant that you flatter yourself you are already beyond their reach, they will close upon you. You might as well think of escaping from the power of the omnipresent God, as from mine! If you could touch so much as my finger, you should expiate it in hours and months and years of a torment, of which as yet you have not the remotest idea! Re-

member! I am not talking at random! I do not utter a word, that, if you provoke me, shall not be executed to the severest letter!

It may be supposed that these menaces were not without their effect. I withdrew in silence. My whole soul revolted against the treatment I endured, and yet I could not utter a word. Why could not I speak the expostulations of my heart, or propose the compromise I meditated? It was inexperience, and not want of strength, that awed me. Every act of Mr. Falkland contained something new, and I was unprepared to meet it. Perhaps it will be found that the greatest hero owes the propriety of his conduct, to the habit of encountering difficulties and calling out with promptness the energies of his mind.

I contemplated the proceedings of my patron with the deepest astonishment. Humanity and general kindness

were fundamental parts of his character; but in relation to me they were sterile and inactive. His own interest required that he should purchase my kindness; but he preferred to govern me by terror, and watch me with unceasing anxiety. I ruminated with the most mournful sensations upon the nature of my calamity. I believed that no human being was ever placed in a situation so pitiable as mine. Every atom of my frame seemed to have a several existence, and to crawl within me. I had but too much reason to believe that Mr. Falkland's threats were not empty words. I knew his ability; I felt his ascendancy. If I encountered him, what chance had I of victory? If I were defeated, what was the penalty I had to suffer? Well then, the rest of my life must be devoted to slavish subjection? Miserable sentence! And, if it were, what security had I against the injustice of a man, vigilant, capricious

and criminal? I envied the condemned wretch upon the scaffold. I envied the victim of the inquisition in the midst of his torture. They know what they have to suffer. I had only to imagine every thing terrible, and then say, The fate reserved for me is worse than this!

It was well for me that these sensations were transient: human nature could not long support itself under what I then felt. By degrees my mind shook off its burthen. Indignation succeeded to emotions of terror. The hostility of Mr. Falkland excited hostility in me. I was determined I would never calumniate him in matters of the most trivial import; much less betray the grand secret upon which every thing dear to him depended. But, totally abjuring the offensive, I resolved to stand firmly upon the defensive. The liberty of acting as I pleased I would preserve, whatever might be the risque. If I were worsted in the contest,

I would at least have the consolation of reflecting that I had exerted myself with energy. In proportion as I thus determined, I drew off my forces from petty incursions, and felt the propriety of acting with premeditation and system. I ruminated incessantly upon plans of deliverance, but I was anxious that my choice should not be precipitately made.

It was during this period of my deliberation and uncertainty that Mr. Forester terminated his visit. He observed a strange distance in my behaviour, and, in his good-natured, rough way, reproached me for it. I could only answer with a gloomy look of mysterious import, and a mournful and expressive silence. He sought me for an explanation, but I was now as ingenious in avoiding, as I had before been ardent to seek him; and he quitted our house, as he afterwards told me, with an impression, that there was some ill destiny that hung over it,

which seemed fated to make all its inhabitants miserable, without its being possible for a by-stander to penetrate the reason.

CHAP. VIII.

Mr. Forester had left us about three weeks, when Mr. Falkland sent me upon some business, to an estate he possessed in a neighbouring county, about fifty miles from his principal residence. The road led in a direction wholly wide of the habitation of our late visitor. I was upon my return from the place to which I had been sent, when I began in fancy to take a survey of the various circumstances of my condition, and by degrees lost, in the profoundness of my contemplation, all attention to the surrounding objects. The first determination of my mind, was to escape from the lynx-eyed jealousy and despotism of Mr. Falkland; the second to provide, by every effort of prudence and deliberation

I could devise, against the danger with which I well knew my attempt must be accompanied.

Occupied with these meditations, I rode many miles, before I perceived that I had totally deviated from the right path. At length I roused myself, and surveyed the horizon round me; but I could observe nothing with which my organ was previously acquainted. On three sides, the heath stretched as far as the eye could reach; on the fourth, I discovered at some distance a wood of no ordinary dimensions. Before me, scarcely a single track could be found, to mark that any human being had ever visited the spot. As the best expedient I could devise, I bent my course towards the wood I have mentioned, and then pursued, as well as I was able, the windings of the inclosure. This led me, after some time, to the end of the heath, but I was still as much at a loss as ever

respecting the road I should pursue. The sun was hid from me by a grey and cloudy atmosphere; I was induced to continue along the skirts of the wood, and surmounted with some difficulty the hedges and other obstacles that from time to time presented themselves. My thoughts were gloomy and disconsolate; the dreariness of the day, and the solitude which surrounded me, seemed to communicate a sadness to my soul. I had proceeded a considerable way, and was overcome with hunger and fatigue, when I discovered a road and a little inn at no great distance. I made up to them, and upon enquiry found that, instead of pursuing the proper direction, I had taken one that led to Mr. Forester's, rather than to my own habitation. I alighted, and was entering the house, when the appearance of that gentleman struck my eyes.

Mr. Forester accosted me with kind-

ness, invited me into the room where he had been sitting, and enquired what accident had brought me to that place. While he was speaking, I could not help recollecting the extraordinary manner in which we were thus once more brought together, and a train of ideas was by this means suggested to my mind. Some refreshment was by Mr. Forester's order prepared for me; I sat down, and partook of it. Still this thought dwelt upon my recollection :———Mr. Falkland will never be made acquainted with our meeting; I have an opportunity thrown in my way, which if I do not improve, I shall deserve all the consequences that may result. I can now converse with a friend, and a powerful friend, without fear of being watched and overlooked. What wonder that I was tempted to disclose, not Mr. Falkland's secret, but my own situation, and receive the advice

of a man of worth and experience, which might perhaps be adequately done without entering into any detail injurious to my patron?

Mr. Forester, on his part, expressed a desire to learn, why it was I thought myself unhappy, and why I had avoided him during the latter part of his residence under the same roof, as evidently as I had before taken pleasure in his communications. I replied, that I could give him but an imperfect satisfaction upon these points; but what I could, I would willingly explain. The fact, I proceeded, was, that there were reasons which rendered it impossible for me to have a tranquil moment under the roof of Mr. Falkland. I had revolved the matter again and again in my mind, and was finally convinced that I owed it to myself to withdraw from his service. I added, that I was sensible by this half-confidence I might rather seem to merit

the disapprobation of Mr. Forester, than his countenance; but I declared my persuasion that, if he could be acquainted with the whole affair, however strange my behaviour might at present appear, he would applaud my reserve.

He appeared to muse for a moment upon what I had said, and then asked, what reason I could have to complain of Mr. Falkland? I replied, that I entertained the deepest reverence for my patron; I admired his abilities, and considered him as formed for the benefit of his species. I should in my own opinion be the vilest of miscreants, if I uttered a whisper to his disadvantage. But all this did not avail: I was not fit for him; perhaps I was not good enough for him; at all events I must be perpetually miserable so long as I continued to live with him.

I observed Mr. Forester gaze upon me eagerly with curiosity and surprise;

but this circumstance I did not think proper to notice. Having recovered himself, he enquired, why then, that being the case, I did not quit his service? I answered, What he now touched upon, was that which most of all contributed to my misfortune. Mr. Falkland was not ignorant of my dislike to my present situation; perhaps he thought it unreasonable, unjust; but I knew that he would never be brought to consent to my giving way to it.

Here Mr. Forester interrupted me; and, smiling, said, I magnified obstacles, and overrated my own importance, adding, that he would undertake to remove that difficulty, as well as to provide me with a more agreeable appointment. This suggestion produced in me a serious alarm. I replied, that I must intreat him upon no account to think of applying to Mr. Falkland upon the subject. I added, that perhaps I was only

betraying my imbecility; but in reality, unacquainted as I was with experience and the world, I was afraid, though disgusted with my present residence, to expose myself upon a mere project of my own, to the resentment of so considerable a man as Mr. Falkland. If he would favour me with his advice upon the subject, or if he would only give me leave to hope for his protection in case of any unforeseen accident, this was all I presumed to request; and, thus encouraged, I would venture to obey the dictates of my inclination, and fly in pursuit of my lost tranquillity.

Having thus opened myself to this generous friend, as far as I could do it with propriety and safety, he sat for some time silent with an air of deep reflection. At length, with a countenance of unusual severity, and a characteristic fierceness of manner and voice, he thus addressed me: Young man, perhaps you

are ignorant of the nature of the conduct you at present hold. May be, you do not know that, where there is mystery, there is always something at bottom that will not bear the telling. Is this the way to obtain the favour of a man of consequence and respectability? To pretend to make a confidence, and then tell him a disjointed story that has not common sense in it!

I answered, that, whatever were the amount of that prejudice, I must submit. I placed my hope of a candid construction in the present instance, in the rectitude of his nature.

He went on: You do so; do you? I tell you, sir, the rectitude of my nature is an enemy to disguise. Come, boy; you must know that I understand these things better than you. Tell all, or expect nothing from me but censure and contempt.

Sir, replied I, I have spoken from deli-

beration; I have told you my choice, and whatever be the result I must abide by it. If in this misfortune you refuse me your assistance, here I must end, having gained by the communication only your ill opinion and displeasure.

He looked hard at me, as if he would see me through. At length, he relaxed his features, and softened his manner. You are a foolish, headstrong boy, said he, and I shall have an eye upon you. I shall never place in you the confidence I have done. But—I will not desert you. At present, the balance between approbation and dislike, is in your favour. How long it will last I cannot tell; I engage for nothing. But it is my rule, to act as I feel. I will for this time do as you require;—and, pray God, it may answer. I will receive you either now or hereafter under my roof, trusting that I shall not have reason to repent, and that appearances will terminate as favourably

as I wish, though I scarcely know how to hope it.

We were engaged in the earnest discussion of subjects thus interesting to my peace, when we were interrupted by an event the most earnestly to have been deprecated. Without the smallest notice, and as if he had dropped upon us from the clouds, Mr. Falkland burst into the room. I found afterwards, that Mr. Forester had come thus far upon an appointment to meet Mr. Falkland, and that the place of their intended rendezvous was the next stage. Mr. Forester was detained at the inn where we now were, by our accidental rencounter, and in reality had for the moment forgotten his appointment; while Mr. Falkland, not finding him where he expected, proceeded thus far towards the house of his kinsman. To me the meeting was the most unaccountable in the world.

I instantly foresaw the dreadful com-

plication of misfortune that was included in this event. To Mr. Falkland, the meeting between me and his relation, must appear not accidental, but, on my part at least, the result of design. I was totally out of the road I had been travelling by his direction; I was in a road that led directly to the house of Mr. Forester. What must he think of this? How must he suppose I came to that place? The truth, if told, that I came there without design, and purely in consequence of having lost my way, must appear to be the most palpable lie that ever was devised.

Here then I stood detected in the fact of that intercourse which had been so severely forbidden. But in this instance it was infinitely worse, than in those which had already given so much disturbance to Mr. Falkland. It was then frank, and unconcealed; and therefore the presumption was, that it was for

purposes that required no concealment. But the present interview, if concerted, was in the most emphatical degree clandestine. Nor was it less perilous, than it was clandestine. It had been forbidden with the most dreadful menaces; and Mr. Falkland was not ignorant how deep an impression those menaces had made upon my imagination. Such a meeting therefore could not have been concerted under such circumstances, for a trivial purpose, or for any purpose that his heart did not ache to think of. Such was the amount of my crime; such was the agony my appearance was calculated to inspire; and it was reasonable to suppose that the penalty I had to expect would be proportionable. The threats of Mr. Falkland still sounded in my ears, and I was in a transport of terror.

The conduct of the same man in different circumstances, is often so various, as

to render it very difficult to be accounted for. Mr. Falkland, in this to him terrible crisis, did not seem to be in any degree hurried away by passion. For a moment he was dumb, his eyes glared with astonishment; and the next moment, as it were, he had the most perfect calmness and self-command. Had it been otherwise, I have no doubt that I should instantly have entered into an explanation of the manner in which I came there, the ingenuousness and consistency of which could not but have been in some degree attended with a favourable event. But as it was, I suffered myself to be overcome; I yielded, as in a former instance, to the discomfiting influence of surprise. I dared scarcely breathe; I observed the appearances with equal anxiety and surprise. Mr. Falkland quietly ordered me to return home, and take along with me the groom he had brought with him. I obeyed in silence.

I afterwards understood, that he enquired minutely of Mr. Forester the circumstances of our meeting; and that that gentleman, perceiving that the meeting itself was discovered, and guided by habits of frankness, which, when once rooted in a character, it is difficult to counteract, told Mr. Falkland every thing that had passed, together with the remarks it had suggested to his own mind. Mr. Falkland received the communication with an ambiguous and studied silence, which by no means operated to my advantage in the already poisoned mind of Mr. Forester. His silence was partly the direct consequence of a mind watchful, inquisitive and doubting; and partly perhaps was adopted for the sake of the effect it was calculated to produce, Mr. Falkland not being unwilling to encourage prejudices against a character, which might one day come in competition with his own.

As to me, I went home indeed, for this was not a moment to resist. Mr. Falkland, with a premeditation to which he had given the appearance of accident, had taken care to send with me a guard to attend upon his prisoner. I seemed as if conducting to one of those fortresses, famed in the history of despotism, from which the wretched victim is never known to come forth alive; and, when I entered my chamber, I felt as if I were entering a dungeon. I reflected that I was at the mercy of a man, exasperated at my disobedience, and who was already formed to cruelty by successive murders. My prospects were now closed; I was cut off for ever from pursuits that I had meditated with ineffable delight; my death might be the event of a few hours. I was a victim at the shrine of conscious guilt that knew neither rest nor satiety; I should be blotted from the catalogue of the living, and

my fate remain eternally a secret; the man who added my murder to his former crimes, would show himself the next morning, and be hailed with the admiration and applause of his species.

In the midst of these terrible imaginations, one idea presented itself that allevated my feelings. This was the recollection of the strange and unaccountable tranquillity which Mr. Falkland had manifested, when he discovered me in company with Mr. Forester. I was not deceived by this. I knew that the calm was temporary, and would be succeeded by a tumult and whirlwind of the most dreadful sort. But a man under the power of such terrors as now occupied me, catches at every reed. I said to myself, This tranquillity is a period it is incumbent upon me to improve; the shorter its duration may be found, the more speedy am I obliged to be in the use of it. In a word, I took the reso-

lution, because I already stood in fear of the vengeance of Mr. Falkland, to risque the possibility of provoking it in a degree still more inexpiable, and terminate at once my present state of uncertainty. I had now opened my case to Mr. Forester, and he had given me positive assurances of his protection.—I determined immediately to address the following letter to Mr. Falkland. The consideration that, if he meditated any thing tragical, such a letter would only tend to confirm him, did not enter into the present feelings of my mind.

SIR,

I have conceived the intention of quitting your service. This is a measure we ought both of us to desire. I shall then be, what it is my duty to be, master of my own actions. You will be delivered from the presence of a person, whom

you cannot prevail upon yourself to behold without unpleasing emotions.

Why should you subject me to an eternal penance? Why should you consign my youthful hopes to suffering and despair? Consult the principles of humanity that have marked the general course of your proceedings, and do not let me, I intreat you, be made the subject of a useless severity. My heart is impressed with gratitude for your favours. I sincerely ask your forgiveness for the many errors of my conduct. I consider the treatment I have received under your roof, as one almost uninterrupted scene of kindness and generosity. I shall never forget my obligations to you, and will never betray them.

I remain, Sir,
Your most grateful, respectful
and dutiful servant,

CALEB WILLIAMS.

Such was my employment of the evening of a day, which will be ever memorable in the history of my life. Mr. Falkland not being yet returned, though expected every hour, I was induced to make use of the pretence of fatigue to avoid an interview. I went to bed. It may be imagined that my slumbers were neither deep nor refreshing.

The next morning I was informed, that my patron did not come home till late, that he had enquired for me, and, being told that I was in bed, had said nothing further upon the subject. Satisfied in this respect, I went to the breakfasting parlour, and, though full of anxiety and trepidation, endeavoured to busy myself in arranging the books, and a few other little occupations, till Mr. Falkland should come down. After a short time I heard his step, which I perfectly well knew how to distinguish, in the passage. Presently he stopped, and, speaking to some

one in a sort of deliberate, but smothered voice, I overheard him repeat my name as enquiring for me. In conformity to the plan I had persuaded myself to adopt, I now laid the letter I had written upon the table at which he usually sat, and made my exit at one door, as Mr. Falkland entered at the other. This done, I withdrew, with flutterings and palpitation, to a private apartment, a sort of light closet at the end of the library, where I was accustomed not unfrequently to sit.

I had not been here three minutes, when I heard the voice of Mr. Falkland calling me. I went to him in the library. His manner was that of a man labouring with some dreadful thought, and endeavouring to give an air of carelessness and insensibility to his behaviour. Perhaps no carriage of any other sort could have produced a sensation of such inexplicable horror, or have excited, in the person who

was its object, such anxious uncertainty about the event.—That is your letter, said he, throwing it.

My lad, continued he, I believe now you have played all your tricks, and the farce is nearly at an end! With your apishness and absurdity however you have taught me one thing, and, whereas before now I have winced at them with torture, I am now as tough as an elephant. I shall crush you in the end with the same indifference, that I would any other little insect that disturbed my serenity.

I am unable to tell what brought about your meeting with Mr. Forester yesterday. It might be design; it might be accident. But, I shall not forget it. You write me here, that you are desirous to quit my service. To that I have a short answer, You never shall quit it with life. If you attempt it, you shall never cease to rue your folly as long as you exist. That is my will; and I will

not have it resisted. The very next time you disobey me in that or any other article, there is an end of your vagaries for ever. Perhaps your situation may be a pitiable one; it is for you to look to that. I only know that it is in your power to prevent its growing worse; no time nor chance shall ever make it better.

Do not imagine I am afraid of you! I wear an armour, against which all your weapons are impotent. I have dug a pit for you; and, whichever way you move, backward or forward, to the right or the left, it is ready to swallow you. Be still! If once you fall, call as loud as you will, no man on earth shall hear your cries; prepare a tale however plausible, or however true, the whole world shall execrate you for an impostor. Your innocence shall be of no service to you; I laugh at so feeble a defence. It is I that say it; you may believe what I tell you. Do you not know, miserable

wretch! added he; suddenly altering his tone, and stamping upon the ground with fury; that I have sworn to preserve my reputation whatever be the expence, that I love it more than the whole world and its inhabitants taken together? And do you think that you shall wound it? Begone, miscreant! reptile! and cease to contend with unsurmountable power!

The part of my history which I am now relating is that which I reflect upon with the least complacency. Why was it, that I was once more totally overcome by the imperious carriage of Mr. Falkland, and unable to utter a word? The reader will be presented with many occasions in the sequel, in which I wanted neither facility in the invention of expedients, nor fortitude in entering upon my justification. Persecution at length gave firmness to my character, and taught me the better part of manhood. But in

the present instance I was irresolute, overawed and abashed.

The speech I had heard was the dictate of frenzy, and it created in me a similar frenzy. It determined me to do the very thing against which I was thus solemnly warned, and fly from my patron's house. I could not enter into parley with him; I could no longer endure the vile subjugation he imposed on me. It was in vain that my reason warned me of the rashness of a measure, to be taken without concert or preparation. I seemed to be in a state in which reason had no power. I felt as if I could coolly survey the several arguments of the case, perceive that they had prudence, truth and common sense on their side; and then answer, I am under the guidance of a director more energetic than you.

I was not long in executing what I had thus rapidly determined. I fixed

on the evening of that very day as the period of my evasion. Even in this short interval I had perhaps sufficient time for deliberation. But all opportunity was useless to me; my mind was fixed, and each succeeding moment only increased the unspeakable eagerness with which I meditated my escape. The hours usually observed by our family in this country residence were regular; and one in the morning was the time I selected for my undertaking.

In searching the apartment where I slept, I had formerly discovered a concealed door, which led to a small apartment of the most secret nature, not uncommon in houses so old as that of Mr. Falkland, and which had perhaps served as a refuge from persecution, or a security from the inveterate hostilities of a barbarous age. I believed no person was acquainted with this hiding place but myself. I felt unaccountably impelled, to

remove into it the different articles of my personal property. I could not at present take them away with me. If I were never to recover them, I felt that it would be a gratification to my sentiment, that no trace of my existence should be found after my departure. Having completed their removal, and waited till the hour I had previously chosen, I stole down quietly from my chamber with a lamp in my hand. I went along a passage that led to a small door opening into the garden, and then crossed the garden, to a gate that intersected an elm-walk and a private horse-path on the outside.

I could scarcely believe my good fortune in having thus far executed my design without interruption. The terrible images Mr. Falkland's menaces had suggested to my mind, made me expect impediment and detection at every step; though the impassioned state of my mind impelled me to advance with desperate

resolution. He probably however counted too securely upon the ascendancy of his sentiments, when imperiously pronounced, to think it necessary to take precautions against a sinister event. For myself, I drew a favourable omen as to the final result of my project, from the smoothness of success that attended it in the outset.

CHAP. IX.

THE first plan that had suggested itself to me was, to go to the nearest public road, and take the earliest stage for London. There I believed I should be most safe from discovery, if the vengeance of Mr. Falkland should prompt him to pursue me; and I did not doubt, among the multiplied resources of the metropolis, to find something which should suggest to me an eligible mode of disposing of my person and industry. I reserved Mr. Forester in my arrangement, as a last resource, not to be called forth unless for immediate protection from the hand of persecution and power. I was destitute of that experience of the world, which can alone render us fertile in resources, or even enable us to

institute a just comparison between the resources that offer themselves. I was like the fascinated animal, that is seized with the most terrible apprehensions, at the same time that he is incapable of adequately considering for his own safety.

The mode of my proceeding being digested, I traced, with a cheerful heart, the unfrequented path it was now necessary for me to pursue. The night was gloomy, and it drizzled with rain. But these were circumstances I had scarcely the power to perceive; all was sunshine and joy within me. I hardly felt the ground; I repeated to myself a thousand times, I am free. What concern have I with danger and alarm? I feel that I am free; I feel that I will continue so. What power is able to hold in chains a mind ardent and determined? What power can cause that man to die, whose whole soul commands him to continue to live? I looked back with abhorrence

to the subjection in which I had been held. I did not hate the author of my misfortunes; truth and justice acquit me of that; I rather pitied the hard destiny to which he seemed condemned. But I thought with unspeakable loathing of those errors, in consequence of which every man is fated to be, more or less, the tyrant or the slave. I was astonished at the folly of my species, that they did not rise up as one man, and shake off chains so ignominious, and misery so insupportable. So far as related to myself, I resolved, and this resolution has never been entirely forgotten by me, to hold myself disengaged from the odious scene, and never fill the part either of the oppressor or the sufferer.

My mind continued in this enthusiastical state, full of confidence, and accessible only to such a portion of fear, as served rather to keep up a state of pleasurable emotion, than to generate an-

guish and distress, during the whole of this nocturnal [expedition. After a walk of three hours, I arrived, without accident, at the village from which I hoped to have taken my passage for the metropolis. At this early hour every thing was quiet; no sound of any thing human saluted my ear. It was with difficulty that I gained admittance into the yard of the inn, where I found a single ostler taking care of some horses. From him I received the unwelcome tidings that the coach was not expected, till six o'clock in the morning of the day after to-morrow, its route through that town recurring only three times a-week.

This intelligence gave the first check to the rapturous inebriation by which my mind had been possessed from the moment I quitted the habitation of Mr. Falkland. The whole of my fortune in ready cash, consisted of about eleven guineas. I had about fifty more that

had fallen to me from the disposal of my property at the death of my father; but that was so vested, as to preclude it from immediate use, and I even doubted whether it would not be found better ultimately to resign it, than, by claiming it, to risk the furnishing a clue to what I most of all dreaded, the persecution of Mr. Falkland. There was nothing I so ardently desired, as the annihilation of all future intercourse between us, that he should not know there was such a person on the earth as myself, and that I should never more hear the repetition of a name which had been so fatal to my peace.

Thus circumstanced, I conceived frugality to be an object by no means unworthy of my attention, unable as I was to prognosticate what discouragements and delays might present themselves to the accomplishment of my wishes, after my arrival in London. For this and other reasons, I determined to adhere to

my design of travelling by the stage; it only remaining for me to consider in what manner I should prevent the eventual delay of twenty-four hours from becoming, by any untoward event, a source of new calamity. It was by no means advisable to remain at the village where I now was, during this interval; nor did I even think it proper to employ it, in proceeding on foot along the great road. I therefore decided upon making a circuit, the direction of which should seem at first extremely wide of my intended route, and then, suddenly taking a different inclination, should enable me to arrive by the close of day, at a market-town twelve miles nearer to the metropolis.

Having fixed the economy of the day, and persuaded myself that it was the best which, under the circumstances, could be adopted, I dismissed, for the most part, all further anxieties from my mind, and

eagerly yielded myself up to the different amusements that arose. I rested and went forward at the impulse of the moment. At one time I reclined upon a bank immersed in contemplation, and at another exerted myself to analyse the prospects which succeeded each other. The haziness of the morning, was followed by a spirit-stirring and beautiful day. With the ductility so characteristic of a youthful mind, I forgot the anguish which had lately been my continual guest, and occupied myself entirely in dreams of future novelty and felicity. I scarcely ever, in the whole course of my existence, spent a day of more various or exquisite gratification. It furnished a strong, and perhaps not an unsalutary contrast, to the terrors which had preceded, and the dreadful scenes that awaited me.

In the evening I arrived at the place of my destination, and enquired for the

inn at which the coach was accustomed to call. A circumstance however had previously excited my attention, and reproduced in me a state of alarm.

Though it was already dark before I reached the town, my observation had been attracted by a man, who passed me on horseback in the opposite direction, about half a mile on the other side of the town. There was an inquisitiveness in his gesture that I did not like, and, as far as I could discern his figure, I pronounced him an ill-looking man. He had not passed me more than two minutes before I heard the sound of a horse advancing slowly behind me. These circumstances impressed some degree of uneasy sensation upon my mind. I first mended my pace; and, this not appearing to answer the purpose, I afterwards loitered, that the horseman might pass me. He did so; and, as I glanced him,

I thought I saw that it was the same man. He now put his horse into a trot, and entered the town. I followed, and it was not long before I perceived him at the door of an ale-house, drinking a mug of beer. This however the darkness prevented me from discovering, till I was in a manner upon him. I pushed forward, and saw him no more, till, as I entered the yard of the inn where I intended to sleep, the same man suddenly rode up to me, and asked if my name were Williams.

This adventure, *while it had been passing*, expelled the gaiety of my mind, and filled me with anxiety. The apprehension however that I felt, appeared to me groundless; if I were pursued, I took it for granted it would be by some of Mr. Falkland's people, and not by a stranger. The darkness took from me some of the simplest expedients of pre-

caution. I determined at least to proceed to the inn, and make the necessary enquiries.

I no sooner heard the sound of the horse as I entered the yard, and the question proposed to me by the rider, than the dreadful certainty of what I feared instantly took possession of my mind. Every incident connected with my late abhorred situation, was calculated to impress me with the deepest alarm. My first thought was, to betake myself to the fields, and trust to the swiftness of my flight for safety. But this was scarcely practicable; I remarked that my enemy was alone; and I believed that, man to man, I might reasonably hope to get the better of him, either by the firmness of my determination, or the subtlety of my invention.

Thus resolved, I replied in an impetuous and peremptory tone, that I was the man he took me for; adding, I guess

your errand; but it is to no purpose. You come to conduct me back to Falkland House; but no force shall ever drag me to that place alive. I have not taken my resolution without strong reasons; and all the world shall not persuade me to alter it. I am an Englishman; and it is the privilege of an Englishman to be sole judge and master of his own actions.

You are in the devil of a hurry, replied the man, to guess my intentions, and tell your own. But your guess is right, and mayhap you may have reason to be thankful that my errand is not something worse. Sure enough the squire expects you; but I have a letter, and when you have read that, I suppose you will come off a little of your stoutness. If that does not answer, it will then be time to think what is to be done next.

Thus saying, he gave me his letter, which was from Mr. Forester, whom, as he told me, he had left at Mr. Falkland's

house. I went into a room of the inn for the purpose of reading it, and was followed by the bearer. The letter was as follows:

WILLIAMS,

My brother Falkland has sent the bearer in pursuit of you. He expects that, if found, you will return with him. I expect it too. It is of the utmost consequence to your future honour and character. After reading these lines, if you are a villain and a rascal, you will perhaps endeavour to fly. If your conscience tells you, "You are innocent," you will, out of all doubt, come back. Show me then whether I have been your dupe; and, while I was won over by your seeming ingenuousness, have suffered myself to be made the tool of a designing knave. If you come, I pledge myself that, if you clear your reputation, you shall not only be free to go wherever you please, but shall

receive every assistance in my power to give. Remember, I engage for nothing further than that.

VALENTINE FORESTER.

What a letter was this? To a mind like mine, glowing with the love of virtue, such an address was strong enough to draw the person to whom it was addressed, from one end of the earth to the other. My mind was full of confidence and energy. I felt my own innocence, and was determined to assert it. I was willing to be driven out a fugitive; I even rejoiced in my escape, and cheerfully went out into the world destitute of every provision, and depending for my future prospects upon my own ingenuity.

Thus much, said I, Falkland! you may do. Dispose of me as you please with respect to the goods of fortune; but you shall neither make prize of my

liberty, nor sully the whiteness of my name. I repassed in my thoughts every memorable incident that had happened to me under his roof. I could recollect nothing except the affair of the mysterious trunk, out of which the shadow of a criminal accusation could be extorted. In that instance my conduct had been highly reprehensible, and I had never looked back upon it without remorse and self-condemnation. But I did not believe that it was of the nature of those actions which can be brought under legal censure. I could still less persuade myself that Mr. Falkland, who shuddered at the very possibility of detection, and who considered himself as completely in my power, would dare to bring forward a subject, so closely connected with the eternal agony of his soul. In a word, the more I reflected on the phrases of Mr. Forester's billet, the less could I imagine the nature of those

scenes to which they were to serve as a prelude.

The inscrutableness however of the mystery they contained, did not suffice to overwhelm my courage. My mind seemed to undergo an entire revolution. Timid and embarrassed as I had felt myself, when I regarded Mr. Falkland as my clandestine and domestic foe, I now conceived that the case was entirely altered. Meet me, said I, as an open accuser; if we must contend, let us contend in the face of day; and then, unparalleled as your resources may be, I will not fear you. Innocence and guilt were, in my apprehension, the things in the whole world the most opposite to each other. I would not suffer myself to believe, that the former could be confounded with the latter, unless the innocent man first allowed himself to be subdued in mind, before he was defrauded of the good opinion of mankind. Virtue rising su-

perior to every calumny, defeating by a plain, unvarnished tale all the stratagems of vice, and throwing back upon her adversary the confusion with which he had hoped to overwhelm her, was one of the favourite subjects of my youthful reveries. I was determined never to prove an instrument of destruction to Mr. Falkland; but I was not less resolute to obtain justice to myself.

The issue of all these confident hopes I shall immediately have occasion to relate. It was thus, with the most generous and undoubting spirit, that I rushed upon irretrievable ruin.

Friend, said I to the bearer, after a considerable interval in silence; You are right. This is indeed an extraordinary letter you have brought me; but it answers its purpose. I will certainly go with you now, whatever be the consequence. No person shall ever impute blame to me, so long as I have it in my

power to clear myself. I felt, in the circumstances in which I was placed by Mr. Forester's letter, not merely a willingness, but an alacrity and impatience to return. We procured a second horse. We proceeded on our journey in silence. My mind was occupied again in endeavouring to account for Mr. Forester's letter. I knew the inflexibility and sternness of Mr. Falkland's mind in accomplishing the purposes he had at heart; but I also knew that every virtuous and magnanimous principle was congenial to his character.

When we arrived, midnight was already past, and we were obliged to waken one of the servants to give us admittance. I found that Mr. Forester had left a message for me, in consideration of the possibility of my arrival during the night, directing me immediately to go to bed, and to take care that I did not come weary and exhausted to the

business of the following day. I endeavoured to take his advice; but my slumbers were unrefreshing and disturbed. I suffered however no reduction of courage; the singularity of my situation, my conjectures with respect to the present, my eagerness for the future, did not allow me to sink into a languid and inactive state.

Next morning the first person I saw was Mr. Forester. He told me that he did not yet know what Mr. Falkland had to allege against me, for that he had refused to know. He had arrived at the house of his brother by appointment on the preceding day to settle some indispensable business, his intention having been to depart the moment the business was finished, as he knew that conduct on his part would be most agreeable to Mr. Falkland. But he was no sooner come, than he found the whole house in confusion, the alarm of my elope-

ment having been given a few hours before. Mr. Falkland had dispatched servants in all directions in pursuit of me; and the servant from the market-town arrived at the same moment with Mr. Forester, with intelligence that a person answering the description he gave, had been there very early in the morning enquiring respecting the stage to London.

Mr. Falkland seemed extremely disturbed at this information, and exclaimed upon me with acrimony, as an unthankful and unnatural villain.

Mr. Forester replied; Have more command of yourself, sir! Villain is a serious appellation, and must not be trifled with. Englishmen are free; and no man is to be charged with villany, because he changes one source of subsistence for another.

Mr. Falkland shook his head, and with a smile expressive of acute sensibi-

lity said, Brother, brother, you are the dupe of his art. I always considered him with an eye of suspicion, and was aware of his depravity. But I have just discovered——

Stop, sir! interrupted Mr. Forester. I own, I thought that, in a moment of acrimony, you might be employing harsh epithets in a sort of random style. But if you have a serious accusation to state, we must not be told of that, till it is known whether the lad be within reach of a hearing. I am indifferent myself about the good opinion of others. It is what the world bestows and retracts with so little thought, that I can make no account of its decisions. But that does not authorise me lightly to entertain an ill opinion of another. The slenderest allowance I think I can make to such as I consign to be the example and terror of their species, is that of being heard in their own defence. It is a wise prin-

ciple that requires the judge to come into court, uninformed of the merits of the cause he is to try; and to that principle I am determined to conform as an individual. I shall always think it right to be severe and inflexible in my treatment of offenders; but the severity I exercise in the sequel, must be accompanied with impartiality and caution in what is preliminary.

While Mr. Forester related to me these particulars, he observed me ready to break out into some of the expressions which the narrative suggested, but he would not suffer me to speak. No, said he; I would not hear Mr. Falkland against you; and I cannot hear you in your defence. I come to you at present, to speak, and not to hear. I thought it right to warn you of your danger, but I have nothing more to do now. Reserve what you have to say to the proper time. Make the best story you can for yourself;

true, if truth, as I hope, will serve your purpose; but, if not, the most plausible and ingenious you can invent. That is what self-defence requires from every man where, as it always happens to a man upon his trial, he has the whole world against him, and has his own battle to fight against the world. Farewel; and God send you a good deliverance! If Mr. Falkland's accusation, whatever it be, shall appear premature, depend upon having me more zealously your friend than ever. If not, this is the last act of friendship you will ever receive from me!

It may be believed that this address, so singular, so solemn, so big with conditional menace, did not greatly tend to encourage me. I was totally ignorant of the charge to be advanced against me; and not a little astonished, when it was in my power to be in the most formidable degree the accuser of Mr.

Falkland, to find the principles of equity so completely reversed, as for the innocent, but instructed individual to be the party accused and suffering, instead of having, as was natural, the real criminal at his mercy. I was still more astonished at the super-human power Mr. Falkland seemed to possess, of bringing the object of his persecution within the sphere of his authority; a reflection attended with some check to that eagerness and boldness of spirit, which now constituted the ruling passions of my mind.

But this was no time for meditation. To the sufferer the course of events is taken out of his direction, and he is hurried along with an irresistible force, without finding it within the compass of his efforts to check their rapidity. I was allowed only a short time to recollect myself, when my trial commenced. I was conducted to the library where I

had passed so many happy and so many contemplative hours, and found there Mr. Forester and three or four of the servants already assembled, in expectation of me and my accuser. Every thing was calculated to suggest to me that I must trust only in the justice of the parties concerned, and had nothing to hope from their indulgence. Mr. Falkland entered at one door, almost as soon as I entered at the other.

CHAP. X.

He began: It has been the principle of my life, never to inflict a wilful injury upon any thing that lives; I need not express my regret, when I find myself obliged to be the promulgator of a criminal charge. How gladly would I pass unnoticed the evil I have sustained; but I owe it to society to detect an offender, and prevent other men from being imposed upon, as I have been, by an appearance of integrity.

It would be better, interrupted Mr. Forester, to speak directly to the point. We ought not, though unwarily, by apologising for ourselves, to create at such a time a prejudice against an individual, against whom a criminal accusation will always be prejudice enough.

I strongly suspect, continued Mr. Falkland, this young man, who has been peculiarly the object of my kindnes, of having robbed me to a considerable amount.

What, replied Mr. Forester, are the grounds of your suspicion?

The first of them is the actual loss I have sustained in notes, jewels, and plate. I have missed bank-notes to the amount of nine hundred pounds, three gold repeaters of considerable value, a complete set of diamonds, the property of my late mother, and several other articles.

And why, continued my arbitrator, astonishment, grief, and a desire to retain his self-possession strongly contending in his countenance and voice, do you fix on this young man as the instrument of the depredation?

I found him, on my coming home, upon the day when every thing was in

disorder from the alarm of fire, in the very act of quitting the private apartment where these things were deposited. He was confounded at seeing me, and hastened to withdraw as soon as he possibly could.

Did you say nothing to him, take no notice of the confusion your sudden appearance produced?

I asked what was his errand in that place. He was at first so terrified and overcome, that he could not answer me. Afterwards, with a good deal of faltering he said, that, when all the servants were engaged in endeavouring to save the most valuable part of my property, he had come hither with the same view; but that he had as yet removed nothing.

Did you immediately examine, to see that every thing was safe?

No. I was accustomed to confide in his honesty, and I was suddenly called

away, in the present instance, to attend to the increasing progress of the flames. I therefore only took out the key from the door of the apartment, having first locked it, and, putting it in my pocket, hastened to go where my presence seemed indispensably necessary.

How long was it before you missed your property?

The same evening. The hurry of the scene had driven the circumstance entirely out of my mind, till, going by accident near the apartment, the whole affair, together with the singular and equivocal behaviour of Williams, rushed at once upon my recollection. I immediately entered, examined the trunk in which these things were contained, and to my astonishment found the locks broken and the property gone.

What steps did you take upon this discovery?

I sent for Williams, and talked to

him very seriously upon the subject. But he had now perfectly recovered his self-command, and calmly and stoutly denied all knowledge of the matter. I urged him with the enormousness of the offence, but it made no impression. He did not discover either the surprise and indignation one would have expected from a person entirely innocent, or the uneasiness that generally attends upon guilt. He was rather silent and reserv-ed. I then informed him, that I should proceed in a manner different from what he might perhaps expect. I would not, as is too frequent in such cases, make a general search, for I had rather lose my property for ever without redress, than expose a multitude of innocent persons to anxiety and injustice. My suspicion, for the present, unavoidably fixed upon him. But, in a matter of so great consequence, I was determined not to act upon suspicion. I would

neither incur the possibility of ruining him being innocent, nor be the instrument of exposing others to his depredations, if guilty. I should therefore merely insist upon his continuing in my service. He might depend upon it he should be well watched, and I trusted the whole truth would eventually appear. Since he avoided confession now, I advised him to consider how far it was likely he would come off with impunity at last. This I was determined on, that the moment he attempted an escape, I would consider that as an indication of guilt, and proceed accordingly.

What circumstances have occurred from that time to the present?

None upon which I can infer a certainty of guilt. Several that agree to favour a suspicion. From that time Williams was perpetually uneasy in his situation, always desirous, as it now appears, to escape, but afraid to adopt such

a measure without certain precautions. It was not long after, that you, Mr. Forester, became my visitor. I observed with dissatisfaction the growing intercourse between you, reflecting on the equivocalness of his character, and the attempt he would probably make to render you the dupe of his hypocrisy. I accordingly threatened him severely, and I believe you observed the change that presently after occurred in his behaviour with relation to you.

I did, and it appeared at that time mysterious and extraordinary.

Some time after, as you well know, a rencounter took place between you, whether accidental or intentional on his part I am not able to say, when he confessed to you the uneasiness of his mind, without discovering the cause, and openly proposed to you to assist him in his flight, and stand, in case of necessity, between him and my resentment. You offered,

it seems, to take him into your service; but nothing, as he acknowledged, would answer his purpose, that did not place his retreat wholly out of my power to discover.

Did it not appear extraordinary to you, that he should hope for any effectual protection from me, while it remained perpetually in your power to satisfy me of his unworthiness?

Perhaps he had hopes that I should not proceed to that step, at least so long as the place of his retreat should be unknown to me, and of consequence the event of my proceeding dubious. Perhaps he confided in his own powers, which are far from contemptible, to construct a plausible tale, especially as he had taken care to have the first impression in his favour. After all, this protection, on your part, was merely reserved in case all other expedients failed. He does not appear to have had any other senti-

ment upon the subject, than that, if he were defeated in his projects for placing himself beyond the reach of justice, it was better to have bespoken a place in your patronage, than to be destitute of every resource.

Mr. Falkland having thus finished his evidence, called upon Robert, the valet, to confirm that part of it which related to the day of the fire.

Robert stated, that he happened to be coming through the library that day, a few minutes after Mr. Falkland's being brought home by the sight of the fire, that he had found me standing there with every mark of perturbation and fright, that he was so struck with my appearance that he could not help stopping to notice it, that he had spoken to me two or three times before he could obtain an answer, and that all he could get from me at last, was that I was the most miserable creature alive.

He further said, that, in the evening of the same day, Mr. Falkland called him into the private apartment adjoining to the library, and bid him bring a hammer and some nails. He then showed him a trunk standing in the apartment with its locks and fastenings broken, and ordered him to observe and remember what he saw, but not to mention it to any one. Robert did not at that time know what Mr. Falkland intended by these directions, which were given in a manner uncommonly solemn and significant; but he entertained no doubt that the fastenings were broken and wrenched by the application of a chisel or such-like instrument, with the intention of forcibly opening the trunk.

Mr. Forester observed upon this evidence, that as much of it as related to the day of the fire, seemed indeed to afford powerful reasons for suspicion; and that the circumstances that had occurred

since, strangely concurred to fortify that suspicion. Meantime, that nothing proper to be done might be omitted, he asked whether in my flight I had removed my property, and proposed searching my boxes, to see whether, by that means, any trace could be discovered to confirm the imputation. Mr. Falkland treated this suggestion slightly, saying that, if I were the thief, I had no doubt taken the precaution to obviate so palpable a means of detection. To this Mr. Forester only replied, that conjecture, however skilfully formed, was not always realised in the actions and behaviour of mankind; and ordered that my boxes and trunks, if found, should be brought into the library. I listened to this suggestion with pleasure; and, uneasy and confounded as I was at the appearances combined against me, I trusted in this appeal to give a new face to my cause. I was eager to declare the

place where my property was deposited; and the servants, guided by my direction, presently produced what was enquired for.

The two boxes that were first opened, contained nothing to confirm the accusation against me; in the third were found a watch and several jewels that were immediately known to be the property of Mr. Falkland. The production of this seemingly decisive evidence, excited emotions of astonishment and concern; but no person's astonishment appeared to be greater, than that of Mr. Falkland. That I should have left the stolen goods behind me, would of itself have appeared incredible; but, when it was considered what a secure place of concealment I had found for them, the wonder diminished; and Mr. Forester observed, that it was by no means impossible I might conceive it easier to obtain possession of them afterwards, than

to remove them at the period of my precipitate flight.

Here, however, I thought it necessary to interfere. I fervently urged my right to a fair and impartial construction. I asked Mr. Forester, whether it were probable, if I had stolen these things, that I should not have contrived, at least to remove them along with me? And again, whether, if I had been conscious they would be found among my property, I should myself have indicated the place where I had concealed it?

The insinuation I conveyed against Mr. Forester's impartiality, overspread his whole countenance for an instant with the flush of anger.

Impartiality, young man! yes, be sure, from me you shall experience an impartial treatment! God send that may answer your purpose! Presently you shall be heard at full in your own defence.

You expect us to believe you inno-

cent, because you did not remove these things along with you. The money is removed. Where, sir, is that? We cannot answer for the inconsistencies and oversights of any human mind, and least of all, if that mind should appear to be disturbed with the consciousness of guilt. You observe that it was by your own direction these boxes and trunks have been found. That is indeed extraordinary. It appears little less than infatuation. But to what purpose appeal to probabilities and conjecture, in the face of incontestable facts? There, sir, are the boxes. You alone knew where they were to be found. You alone had the keys. Tell us then how this watch and these jewels came to be contained in them?

I was silent.

To the rest of the persons present I seemed to be merely the subject of detection; but in reality I was, of all the spectators, that individual who was most at a

loss to conceive, through every stage of the scene, what would come next, and who listened to every word that was uttered with the most uncontrolable amazement. Amazement however alternately yielded to indignation and horror. At first I could not refrain from repeatedly attempting to interrupt; but I was checked in these attempts by Mr. Forester, and I presently felt how necessary it was to my future peace, that I should collect the whole energy of my mind to repel the charge, and assert my innocence.

Every thing being now produced that could be produced against me, Mr. Forester turned to me with a look of concern and pity, and told me that now was the time, if I chose to allege any thing in my defence. In reply to this invitation I spoke nearly as follows:

I am innocent. It is in vain that circumstances are accumulated against me: there is not a person upon earth less ca-

pable than I, of the things of which I am accused. I appeal to my heart; I appeal to my looks; I appeal to every sentiment my tongue ever uttered.

I could perceive that the fervour with which I spoke, made some impression upon every one that heard me. But, in a moment, their eyes were turned upon the property that lay before them, and their countenances changed. I proceeded:

One thing more I must aver; Mr. Falkland is not deceived: he perfectly knows that I am innocent.

I had no sooner uttered these words, than an involuntary cry of indignation burst from every person in the room. Mr. Forester turned to me with a look of extreme severity, and said:

Young man consider well what you are doing! It is the privilege of the party accused, to say whatever he thinks proper; and I will take care that you

shall enjoy that privilege in its utmost extent. But do you think it will conduce in any respect to your benefit, to throw out such insolent and intolerable insinuations?

I thank you most sincerely, replied I, for your caution; but I well know what it is I am doing. I make this declaration, not merely because it is solemnly true, but because it is inseparably connected with my vindication. I am the party accused, and I shall be told that I am not to be believed in my own defence. I can produce no other witnesses of my innocence; I therefore call upon Mr. Falkland to be my evidence. I ask him,

Did you never boast to me in private of your power to ruin me? Did you never say that, if once I brought on myself the weight of your displeasure, my fall should be irreparable? Did you not tell me that, though I should prepare in

that case a tale however plausible or however true, you would take care that the whole world should execrate me as an impostor? Were not those your very words? Did you not add that my innocence should be of no service to me, and that you laughed at so feeble a defence? I ask you further, Did you not receive a letter from me the morning of the day on which I departed, requesting your consent to my departure? Should I have done that, if my flight had been that of a thief? I challenge any man to reconcile the expressions of that letter with this accusation. Should I have begun with stating that I had conceived a desire to quit your service, if my desire, and the reasons for it, had been of the nature that is now alleged? Should I have dared to ask for what reason I was thus subjected to an eternal penance?

Saying this, I took out a copy of

my letter, and laid it open upon the table.

Mr. Falkland returned no immediate answer to my interrogations. Mr. Forester turned to him, and said, Well, sir, what is your reply to this challenge of your servant?

Mr. Falkland answered: Such a mode of defence scarcely calls for a reply. But I answer, I held no such conversation; I never used such words; I received no such letter. Surely it is no sufficient refutation of a criminal charge, that the criminal repels what is alleged against him, with volubility of speech, and intrepidity of manner?

Mr. Forester then turned to me. If, said he, you trust your vindication to the plausibility of your tale, you must take care to render it consistent and complete. You have not told us what was the cause of the confusion and anxiety, in which Robert professes to have

found you, why you were so impatient to quit the service of Mr. Falkland, or how you account for certain articles of his property being found in your possession.

All that, sir, answered I, is true. There are certain parts of my story that I have not told. If they were told, they would not contribute to my disadvantage, and they would make the present accusàtion appear still more astonishing. But I cannot, as yet at least, prevail upon myself to tell them. Is it necessary to give any particular and precise reasons why I should wish to change the place of my residence? You all of you know the unfortunate state of Mr. Falkland's mind. You know the sternness, reservedness and distance of his manners. If I had no other reasons, surely it would afford small presumption of criminality that I should wish to change his service for another.

The question of how these articles of Mr. Falkland's property came to be found in my possession, is more material. It is a question I am wholly unable to answer. Their being found there, was at least as unexpected to me, as to any one of the persons now present. I only know that, as I have the most perfect assurance of Mr. Falkland's being conscious of my innocence, for, observe! I do not shrink from that assertion; I reiterate it with new confidence; I therefore firmly and from my soul believe that their being there is of Mr. Falkland's contrivance.

I no sooner said this, than I was again interrupted by an involuntary exclamation from every one present. They looked at me with furious glances, as if they could have torn me to pieces. I proceeded:

I have now answered every thing that is alleged against me.

Mr. Forester, you are a lover of justice; I conjure you not to violate it in my person. You are a man of penetration; look at me, do you see any of the marks of guilt? Recollect all that has ever passed under your observation; is it compatible with a mind capable of what is now alleged against me? Could a real criminal have shown himself so unabashed, composed and firm as I have now done?

Fellow-servants! Mr. Falkland is a man of rank and fortune; he is your master. I am a poor country lad, without a friend in the world. That is a ground of real difference to a certain extent; but it is not a sufficient ground for the subversion of justice. Remember, that I am in a situation that is not to be trifled with; that a decision given against me now, in a case in which I solemnly assure you I am innocent, will for ever deprive me of reputation and

peace of mind, combine the whole world in a league against me, and determine perhaps upon my liberty and my life. If you believe, if you see, if you know, that I am innocent, speak for me. Do not suffer a pusillanimous timidity to prevent you from saving a fellow creature from destruction, who does not deserve to have a human being for his enemy. Why have we the power of speech, but to communicate our thoughts? I will never believe that a man conscious of innocence, cannot make other men perceive that he has that thought. Do not you feel that my whole heart tells me, I am not guilty of what is imputed to me?

To you, Mr. Falkland, I have nothing to say. I know you, and know that you are impenetrable. At the very moment that you are urging such odious charges against me, you admire my resolution and forbearance. But I have

nothing to hope from you. You can look upon my ruin without pity or remorse. I am most unfortunate indeed in having to do with such an adversary. You oblige me to say ill things of you; but I appeal to your own heart, whether my language is that of exaggeration or revenge.

Every thing that could be alleged on either side being now concluded, Mr. Forester undertook to make some remarks upon the whole. Williams, said he, the charge against you is heavy; the direct evidence strong; the corroborating circumstances numerous and striking. I grant that you have shown considerable dexterity in your answers; but you will learn, young man, to your cost, that dexterity, however powerful it may be in certain cases, will avail little against the stubbornness of truth. It is fortunate for mankind that the empire of talents has its limitations, and that it

is not in the power of ingenuity, to subvert the distinctions of right and wrong. Take my word for it, that the true merits of the case against you will be too strong for sophistry to overturn, that justice will prevail, and impotent malice be defeated.

To you, Mr. Falkland, society is obliged, for having placed this black affair in its true light. Do not suffer the malignant aspersions of the criminal to give you uneasiness. Depend upon it that they will be found of no weight. I have no doubt that your character, in the judgment of every person that has heard them, stands higher than ever. We feel for your misfortune, in being obliged to hear such calumnies from a person who has injured you so grossly. But you must be considered in that respect as a martyr in the public cause. The purity of your motives and dispositions is beyond the reach of malice; and truth and equity

will not fail to award, to your calumniator infamy, and to you the love and approbation of mankind.

I have now told you, Williams, what I think of your case. But I have no right to assume to be your ultimate judge. Desperate as it appears to me, I will give you one piece of advice, as if I were retained as a counsel to assist you. Leave out of it whatever tends to the disadvantage of Mr. Falkland. Defend yourself as well as you can, but do not attack your master. It is your business to create in those that hear you, a prepossession in your favour. But the recrimination you have been now practising, will always create indignation. Dishonesty will admit of some palliation. The deliberate malice you have now been showing, is a thousand times more atrocious. It proves you to have the mind of a demon, rather than of a felon. Wherever you shall repeat it,

those who hear you will pronounce you guilty upon that, even if the proper evidence against you were glaringly defective. If therefore you would consult your interest, which seems to be your only consideration, it is incumbent upon you by all means immediately to retract that. If you desire to be believed honest, you must in the first place show that you have a due sense of merit in others. You cannot better serve your cause, than by begging pardon of your master, and doing homage to rectitude and worth, even when they are employed in vengeance against you.

It is easy to conceive that my mind sustained an extreme shock from the decision of Mr. Forester; but his call upon me to retract and humble myself before my accuser, penetrated my whole soul with indignation. I answered:

I have already told you I am innocent. I believe that I could not endure

the effort of inventing a plausible defence, if it were otherwise. You have just affirmed that it is not in the power of ingenuity to subvert the distinctions of right and wrong, and in that very instant I find them subverted. This is indeed to me a very awful moment. New to the world, I know nothing of its affairs but what has reached me by rumour, or is recorded in books. I have come into it, with all the ardour and confidence inseparable from my years. In every fellow-being I expected to find a friend. I am unpractised in its wiles, and have even no acquaintance with its injustice. I have done nothing to deserve the animosity of mankind; but, if I may judge from the present scene, I am henceforth to be deprived of the benefits of integrity and honour. I am to forfeit the friendship of every one I have hitherto known, and to be precluded from the power of acquiring

that of others. I must therefore be reduced to derive my satisfaction from myself. Depend upon it, I will not begin that career by dishonourable concessions. If I am to despair of the good will of other men, I will at least maintain the independence of my own mind. Mr. Falkland is my implacable enemy. Whatever may be his merits in other respects, he is acting towards me without humanity, without remorse, and without principle. Do you think I will ever make submissions to a man by whom I am thus treated, that I will fall down at the feet of one who is to me a devil, or kiss the hand that is red with my blood?

In that respect, answered Mr. Forester, do as you shall think proper. I must confess that your firmness and consistency astonish me. They add something to what I had conceived of human powers. Perhaps you have chosen the part which,

all things considered, may serve your purpose best, though I think more moderation would be more conciliating. The exterior of innocence will, I grant, stagger the persons who may have the direction of your fate, but it will never be able to prevail against plain and incontrovertible facts. But I have done with you. I see in you a new instance of that abuse which is so generally made of talents, the admiration of an undiscerning public. I regard you with horror. All that remains is that I should discharge my duty, in consigning you, as a monster of depravity, to the justice of your country.

No, rejoined Mr. Falkland, to that I can never consent. I have put a restraint upon myself thus far, because it was right that evidence and enquiry should take their course. I have suppressed all my habits and sentiments, because it seemed due to the public that

hypocrisy should be unmasked.. But I can suffer this violence no longer. I have, through my whole life, interfered, to protect, not overbear the sufferer; and I must do so now. I feel not the smallest resentment of his impotent attacks upon my character; I smile at their malice; and they make no diminution in my benevolence to their author. Let him say what he pleases; he cannot hurt me. It was proper that he should be brought to public shame, that other people might not be deceived by him as we have been. But there is no necessity for proceeding further; and I must insist upon it that he be permitted to depart wherever he pleases. I am sorry that public interest affords so gloomy a prospect for his future happiness.

Mr. Falkland, answered Mr. Forester, these sentiments do honour to your humanity; but I must not give way to them. They only serve to set in a

stronger light the venom of this serpent, this monster of ingratitude, who first robs his benefactor, and then reviles him. Wretch that you are, will nothing move you? Are you inaccessible to remorse? Are you not struck to the heart with the unmerited goodness of your master? Vile calumniator! you are the abhorrence of nature, the opprobrium of the human species, and the earth can only be freed from an insupportable burthen, by your being exterminated! Recollect, sir, that this villain, at the very moment that you are exercising such unexampled forbearance in his behalf, has the presumption to charge you with prosecuting a crime of which you know him to be innocent, nay, with having conveyed the pretended stolen goods among his property, for the express purpose of ruining him. By this unexampled villainy, he makes it your duty to free the world from such a pest,

and your interest to admit no relaxing in your pursuit of him, lest the world should be persuaded by your clemency to credit his vile insinuations.

I care not for consequences, replied Mr. Falkland; I will obey the dictates of my own mind. I will never lend my assistance to the reforming mankind by axes and gibbets; I am sure things will never be as they ought, till honour, and not law, be the dictator of mankind, till vice be taught to shrink before the resistless might of inborn dignity, and not before the cold formality of statutes. If my calumniator were worthy of my resentment, I would chastise him with my own sword, and not that of the magistrate; but in the present case I smile at his malice, and resolve to spare him, as the generous lord of the forest spares the insect that would disturb his repose.

The language you now hold, said

Mr. Forester, is that of romance, and not of reason. Yet I cannot but be struck with the contrast exhibited before me, of the magnanimity of virtue, and the obstinate, impenetrable injustice of guilt. While your mind overflows with goodness, nothing can touch the heart of this thrice-refined villain. I shall never forgive myself for having once been entrapped by his detestable arts. This is no time for us to settle the question between chivalry and law. I shall therefore simply insist as a magistrate, having taken the evidence in this felony, upon my right and duty of following the course of justice, and committing the accused to the county jail.

After some further contest, Mr. Falkland, finding Mr. Forester obstinate and impracticable, withdrew his opposition. Accordingly a proper officer was summoned from the neighbouring village, a mittimus made out, and one of Mr.

Falkland's carriages prepared to conduct me to the place of custody. It will easily be imagined that this sudden reverse was very painfully felt by me. I looked round on the servants who had been the spectators of my examination, but not one of them either by word or gesture expressed compassion for my calamity. The robbery of which I was accused, appeared to them atrocious from its magnitude; and whatever sparks of compassion might otherwise have sprung up in their ingenuous and undisciplined minds, were totally obliterated, by indignation at my supposed profligacy in recriminating upon their worthy and excellent master. My fate being already determined, and one of the servants dispatched for the officer, Mr. Forester and Mr. Falkland withdrew, and left me in the custody of two others.

One of these was the son of a farmer at no great distance, who had been in

habits of long established intimacy with my late father. I was willing accurately to discover the state of mind of those who had been witnesses of this scene, and who had had some previous opportunity of observing my character and manners. I therefore endeavoured to open a conversation with him. Well, my good Thomas, said I, in a querulous tone and with a hesitating manner, am I not a most miserable creature?

Do not speak to me, master Williams! You have given me a shock that I shall not get the better of for one while. You were hatched by a hen, as the saying is, but you came of the spawn of a cockatrice. I am glad to my heart, that honest farmer Williams is dead, your villainy would else have made him curse the day that ever he was born.

Thomas, I am innocent! I swear by

the great God that shall judge me another day, I am innocent!

Pray, do not swear! for goodness sake, do not swear! Your poor soul is damned enough without that. For your sake, lad, I will never take any body's word, nor trust to appearances, thof it should be an angel. Lord bless us! how smoothly you palavered it over, for all the world as if you had been as fair as a new-born babe! But it will not do; you will never be able to persuade people that black is white. For my own part I have done with you. I loved you yesterday, all one as if you had been my own brother. To-day I love you so well, that I would go ten miles with all the pleasure in life to see you hanged.

Good God! Thomas, have you the heart? What a change! I call God to witness I have done nothing to deserve it! What a world do we live in!

Hold your tongue, boy! It makes my very heart sick to hear you! I would not lay a night under the same roof with you for all the world! I should expect the house to fall and crush such wickedness! I admire that the earth does not open and swallow you alive! It is poison so much as to look at you! If you go on at this hardened rate, I believe from my soul that the people you talk to will tear you to pieces, and you will never live to come to the gallows. Oh, yes, you do well to pity yourself: poor, tender thing! that spit venom all round you like a toad, and leave the very ground upon which you crawl infected with your slime.

Finding the person with whom I talked thus impenetrable to all I could say, and considering that the advantage to be gained was small, even if I could overcome his prepossession, I took his advice, and was silent. It was not much longer before every thing was prepared

for my departure, and I was conducted to the same prison which had so lately inclosed the wretched and innocent Hawkinses. They too had been the victims of Mr. Falkland. He exhibited, upon a contracted scale indeed, but in which the truth of delineation was faithfully sustained, a copy of what monarchs are, who reckon among the instruments of their power prisons of state.

CHAP. XI.

For my own part I had never seen a prison, and, like the majority of my brethren, had given myself little concern to enquire what was the condition of those who committed offence against, or became obnoxious to suspicion from, the community. Oh, how enviable is the most tottering shed under which the labourer retires to rest, compared with the residence of these walls!

To me every thing was new, the massy doors, the resounding locks, the gloomy passages, the grated windows, and the characteristic looks of the keepers, accustomed to reject every petition, and to steel their hearts against feeling and pity. Curiosity, and a sense of my situation, induced me to fix my eyes on the faces

of these men, but in a few minutes I drew them away with unconquerable loathing. It is impossible to describe the sort of squalidness and filth with which these mansions are distinguished. I have seen dirty faces in dirty apartments, which have nevertheless borne the impression of health, and spoke carelessness and levity rather than distress. But the dirt of a prison speaks sadness to the heart, and appears to be already in a state of putridity and infection.

I was detained for more than an hour in the apartment of the keeper, one turnkey after another coming in, that they might make themselves familiar with my person. As I was already considered as guilty of felony to a considerable amount, I underwent a rigorous search, and they took from me a penknife, a pair of scissars, and that part of my money, which was in gold. It

was debated whether or not these should be sealed up, to be returned to me, as they said, as soon as I should be acquitted, and had I not displayed an unexpected firmness of manner and vigour of expostulation, such was probably the conduct that would have been pursued. Having undergone these ceremonies, I was thrust into a day-room, in which all the persons then under confinement for felony were assembled, to the number of eleven. Each of them was too much engaged in his own reflections, to take notice of me. Of these, two were imprisoned for horse-stealing, and three for having stolen a sheep, one for shop-lifting, one for coining, two for highway-robbery, and two for burglary.

The horse-stealers were engaged in a game at cards, which was presently interrupted by a difference of opinion, attended with great vociferation, they calling upon one and another to decide it, to

no purpose, one paying no attention to their summons, and another leaving them in the midst of their story, being no longer able to endure his own internal anguish, in the midst of their mummery.

It is a custom among thieves to constitute a sort of mock tribunal of their own body, from whose decision every one is informed whether he shall be acquitted, respited or pardoned, as well as respecting the supposed most skilful way of conducting his defence. One of the housebreakers, who had already passed this ordeal, was stalking up and down the room with a forced bravery, exclaiming to his companion, that he was as rich as the duke of Bedford himself. He had five guineas and a half, which was as much as he could possibly spend in the course of the ensuing month, and what happened after that, it was Jack Ketch's business to see to, not his. As he uttered these words, he threw himself

abruptly upon a bench that was near him, and seemed to be asleep in a moment. But his sleep was uneasy and disturbed, his breathing was hard, and, at intervals, had rather the nature of a groan. A young fellow from the other side of the room, came softly to the place where he lay, with a large knife in his hand; and pressed the back of it with such violence upon his neck, the head hanging over the side of the bench, that it was not till after several efforts that he was able to rise. Oh, Jack! cried this manual jester, I had almost done your business for you! The other expressed no marks of resentment, but sullenly answered, Damn you, why did not you take the edge? It would have been the best thing you have done this many a day*!

* An incident exactly similar to this, was witnessed by a friend of the author, a few years since, in a visit to the prison of Newgate.

The case of one of the persons committed for highway-robbery, was not a little extraordinary. He was a common soldier of a most engaging physiognomy, and two and twenty years of age. The prosecutor, who had been robbed one evening as he returned late from the alehouse, of the sum of three shillings, swore positively to his person. The character of the prisoner was such as has seldom been equalled. He had been ardent in the pursuit of intellectual cultivation; and was accustomed to draw his favourite amusement from the works of Virgil and Horace. The humbleness of his station, combined with his ardour for literature, only served to give an inexpressible heightening to the interestingness of his character. He was plain and unaffected; he assumed nothing; he was capable, when occasion demanded it, of firmness, but, in his ordinary deportment, he seemed

unarmed and unresisting, unsuspicious of guile in others, as he was totally free from guile in himself. His integrity was proverbially great. In one instance he had been intrusted by a lady, to convey a sum of a thousand pounds, to a person at some miles distance: in another he was employed by a gentleman, during his absence, in the care of his house and furniture, to the value of at least five times that sum. His habits of thinking were strictly his own, full of justice, simplicity, and wisdom. He from time to time earned money of his officers, by his peculiar excellence in furbishing arms; but he declined offers that had been made him to become a serjeant or a corporal, saying, that he did not want money, and that in a new situation he should have less leisure for study. He was equally constant, in refusing presents that were offered him, by persons who

had been struck with his merit; not that he was under the influence of false delicacy and pride, but that he had no inclination to accept that, the want of which he did not feel to be an evil. This man died while I was in prison. I received his last breath*.

The whole day I was obliged to spend in the company of these men, some of them having really committed the actions laid to their charge, others whom their ill fortune had rendered the victims of suspicion. The whole was a scene of misery, such as nothing short of actual observation can suggest to the mind. Some were noisy and obstreperous, endeavouring by a false bravery to keep at bay the remembrance of their condition; while others, incapable even of this effort, had the torment of their thoughts aggravated, by the perpetual

* A story extremely similar to this is to be found in the Newgate Calendar, Vol. I. p. 382.

noise and confusion that prevailed around them. In the faces of those who assumed the most courage you might trace the furrows of anxious care, and in the midst of their laboured hilarity dreadful ideas would ever and anon intrude, convulsing their features, and working every line into an expression of the keenest agony. To these men the sun brought no return of joy. Day after day rolled on, but their state was immutable. Existence was to them a scene of invariable melancholy; every moment was a moment of anguish, yet did they wish to prolong that moment, fearful that the coming period would bring a severer fate. They thought of the past with insupportable repentance, each man contented to give his right hand, to have again the choice of that peace and liberty, which he had unthinkingly bartered away. We talk of instruments of torture; Englishmen take

credit to themselves for having banished the use of them from their happy shore! Alas, he that has observed the secrets of a prison, well knows, that there is more torture in the lingering existence of a criminal, in the silent, intolerable minutes that he spends, than in the tangible misery of whips and racks!

Such were our days. At sun-set our jailors appeared, and ordered each man to come away, and be locked into his dungeon. It was a bitter aggravation of our fate, to be under the arbitrary control of these fellows. They felt no man's sorrow; they were of all men least capable of any sort of feeling. They had a barbarous and sullen pleasure, in issuing their detested mandates, and observing the mournful reluctance with which they were obeyed. Whatever they directed, it was in vain to expostulate; fetters, and bread and water, were the sure conse-

quences of resistance. Their tyranny had no other limit than their own caprice. To whom shall the unfortunate felon appeal? To what purpose complain, when his complaints are sure to be received with incredulity? A tale of mutiny and necessary precaution, is the unfailing refuge of the keeper, and this tale is an everlasting bar against redress.

Our dungeons were cells, 7½ feet by 6½, below the surface of the ground, damp, without window, light or air, except from a few holes, worked for that purpose, in the door. In some of these miserable receptacles three persons were put to sleep together *. I was fortunate enough to have one to myself. It was now the approach of winter. We were not allowed to have candles; and, as I have already said, were thrust in here at sun-set, and not liberated till the returning day. This was our situation

* See Howard on Prisons.

for fourteen or fifteen hours out of the four and twenty. I had never been accustomed to sleep more than six or seven hours, and my inclination to sleep was now less than ever. Thus was I reduced to spend half my day in this dreary abode and in complete darkness. This was no trifling aggravation of my lot.

Among my melancholy reflections I tasked my memory, and counted over the doors, the locks, the bolts, the chains, the massy walls and grated windows, that were between me and liberty. These, said I, are the engines that tyranny sits down in cold and serious meditation to invent. This is the empire that man exercises over man. Thus is a being, formed to expatiate, to act, to smile and enjoy, restricted and benumbed. How great must be his depravity or heedlessness, who vindicates this scheme for changing health and gaiety and se-

renity, into the wanness of a dungeon, and the deep furrows of agony and despair!

Thank God, exclaims the Englishman, we have no Bastile! Thank God, with us no man can be punished without a crime! Unthinking wretch! Is that a country of liberty, where thousands languish in dungeons and fetters? Go, go, ignorant fool! and visit the scenes of our prisons! witness their unwholesomeness, their filth, the tyranny of their governors, the misery of their inmates! After that, show me the man shameless enough to triumph, and say, England has no Bastile! Is there any charge so frivolous, upon which men are not consigned to these detested abodes? Is there any villainy that is not practised by justices and prosecutors? But against all this, perhaps you have been told, there is redress. Yes, a redress, that it is the consummation of insult so much

as to name! Where shall the poor wretch, reduced to the last despair, and to whom acquittal perhaps comes just time enough to save him from perishing, —where shall this man find leisure, and much less money, to fee counsel and officers, and purchase the tedious, dear-bought remedy of the law? No, he is too happy to leave his dungeon and the memory of his dungeon behind him; and the same tyranny and wanton oppression become the inheritance of his successor.

For myself, I looked round upon my walls, and forward upon the premature death I had too much reason to expect; I consulted my own heart that whispered nothing but innocence; and I said, This is society. This is the object, the distribution of justice, which is the end of human reason. For this sages have toiled, and the midnight oil has been wasted. This!

The reader will forgive this digression from the immediate subject of my story. If it should be said, these are general remarks; let it be remembered that they are the dear-bought result of experience. It is from the fulness of a bursting heart that reproach thus flows to my pen. These are not the declamations of a man desirous to be eloquent. I have felt the iron of slavery grating upon my soul.

I believed that misery, more pure than that which I now endured, had never fallen to the lot of a human being. I recollected with astonishment my puerile eagerness, to be brought to the test, and have my innocence examined. I execrated it, as the vilest and most insufferable pedantry. I exclaimed in the bitterness of my heart, Of what value is a fair fame? It is the jewel of men formed to be amused with baubles. Without it, I might have had serenity of heart and cheerfulness

of occupation, peace and liberty; why should I consign my happiness to other men's arbitration? But, if a fair fame were of the most inexpressible value, is this the method which common sense would prescribe to retrieve it? The language which these institutions hold out to the unfortunate is, Come, and be shut out from the light of day, be the associate of those whom society has marked out for her abhorrence, be the slave of jailors, be loaded with fetters; thus shall you be cleared from every unworthy aspersion, and restored to reputation and honour! This is the consolation she affords, to those whom malignity or folly, private pique or unfounded positiveness, have, without the smallest foundation, loaded with calumny. For myself I felt my own innocence, and I soon found upon enquiry, that three fourths of those who are regularly subjected to a similar treatment, are persons, whom, even with

all the superciliousness and precipitation of our courts of justice, no evidence can be found sufficient to convict. How slender then must be that man's portion of information and discernment, who is willing to commit his character and welfare to such guardianship!

But my case was even worse than this: I intimately felt that a trial, such as our institutions have hitherto been able to make it, is only the worthy sequel of such a beginning. What chance had I, after the purgation I was now suffering, that I should come out acquitted at last? What probability was there that the trial I had endured in the house of Mr. Falkland, was not just as fair, as any that might be expected to follow? No, I anticipated my own condemnation.

Thus was I cut off for ever, from all that existence has to bestow, from all the high hopes I had so often conceived, from all the future excellence my soul

so much delighted to imagine, to spend a few weeks in a miserable prison, and then to perish by the hand of the public executioner. No language can do justice to the indignant and soul-sickening loathing that these ideas excited. My resentment was not restricted to my prosecutor, but extended itself to the whole machine of society. I could never believe that all this was the fair result of institutions inseparable from the general good. I regarded the whole human species, as so many hangmen and torturers. I considered them as confederated to tear me to pieces; and this wide scene of inexorable persecution, inflicted upon me inexpressible agony. I looked on this side and on that; I was innocent; I had a right to expect assistance; but every heart was steeled against me; every hand was ready to lend its force to make my ruin secure. No man that has not felt, in his own

most momentous concerns, justice, eternal truth, unalterable equity engaged in his behalf, and on the other side brute force, impenetrable obstinacy and unfeeling insolence, can imagine the sensations that then passed through my mind. I saw treachery triumphant and enthroned; I saw the sinews of innocence crumbled into dust, by the gripe of almighty guilt.

What relief had I from these sensations? Was it relief, that I spent the day in the midst of profligacy and execrations, that I saw reflected from every countenance agonies only inferior to my own? He that would form a lively idea of the regions of the damned, needed only to witness for six hours, a scene to which I was confined for many months. Not for one hour could I withdraw myself from this complexity of horrors, or take refuge in the calmness of meditation. Air, exercise, series, contrast,

those grand enliveners of the human frame, I was for ever debarred from, by the inexorable tyranny under which I was fallen. Nor did I find the solitude of my nightly dungeon less insupportable. Its only furniture was the straw that served me for my repose. It was narrow, damp and unwholesome. The slumbers of a mind, wearied, like mine, with the most detestable uniformity, to whom neither amusement nor occupation ever offered themselves to beguile the painful hours, were short, disturbed and unrefreshing. My sleeping, still more than my waking thoughts, were full of perplexity, deformity and disorder. To these slumbers, succeeded the hours which, by the regulations of our prison, I was obliged, though awake, to spend in solitary and cheerless darkness. Here I had neither books, nor pens, nor any thing upon which to engage my attention; all was a sightless blank. How

was a mind, active and indefatigable like mine, to endure this misery? I could not sink it in lethargy; I could not forget my woes; they haunted me with unintermitted and demoniac malice. Cruel, inexorable policy of human affairs, that condemns a man to torture like this; that sanctions it, and knows not what is done under its sanction; that is too supine and unfeeling, to enquire into these petty details; that calls this, the ordeal of innocence, and the protector of freedom! A thousand times I could have dashed my brains against the walls of my dungeon; a thousand times I longed for death, and wished, with inexpressible ardour, for an end to what I suffered; a thousand times I meditated suicide, and ruminated, in the bitterness of my soul, upon the different means of escaping from the load of existence. What had I to do with life? I had seen enough to make me regard it with detestation. Why should I wait the

lingering process of legal despotism, and not dare so much as to die, but when and how its instruments decreed? Still some inexplicable suggestion withheld my hand. I clung with desperate fondness to this shadow of existence, its mysterious attractions, and its hopeless prospects.

CHAP. XII.

Such were the reflections, that haunted the first days of my imprisonment, in consequence of which they were spent in perpetual anguish. But, after a time, nature, wearied with distress, would no longer stoop to the burthen; thought, which is incessantly varying, introduced a series of reflections totally different.

My fortitude revived. I had always been accustomed to cheerfulness, good-humour and serenity, and this habit now returned to visit me, at the bottom of my dungeon. No sooner did my contemplations take this turn, than I saw the reasonableness and possibility of tranqüillity and peace, and my mind whispered to me the propriety of showing, in this forlorn condition, that I was su-

perior to all my persecutors. Blessed state of innocence and self-approbation The sunshine of conscious integrity pierce through all the barriers of my cell, an spoke ten thousand times more joy to m heart, than the accumulated splendours nature and art can communicate to th slaves of vice.

I found out the secret of employing m mind. I said, I am shut up for half th day in total darkness, without any extern source of amusement; the other half spend in the midst of noise, turbulenc and confusion. What then? Can I n draw amusement from the stores of m own mind? Is it not freighted with var ous knowledge? Have I not been em ployed from my infancy, in gratifying a insatiable curiosity? When should I de rive benefit from these superior advan tages, if not at present? Accordingly I tasked the stores of my memory, and my powers of invention. I amused myself

with recollecting the history of my life. By degrees I called to mind a number of minute circumstances, which, but for this exercise, would have been for ever forgotten. I repassed in my thoughts whole conversations, I recollected their subjects, their arrangement, their incidents, frequently their very words. I mused upon these ideas, till I was totally absorbed in thought. I repeated them, till my mind glowed with enthusiasm. I had my different employments, fitted for the solitude of the night, in which I could give full scope to the impulses of my mind, and for the uproar of the day, in which my chief object was, to be insensible to the disorder with which I was surrounded.

By degrees I quitted my own story, and employed myself in imaginary adventures. I figured to myself every situation in which I could be placed, and conceived the conduct to be observed in each. Thus scenes of insult and danger,

of tenderness and oppression, became familiar to me. In fancy I often passed the awful hour of dissolving nature. In some of my reveries I boiled with impetuous indignation, and in others patiently collected the whole force of my mind for some fearful encounter. I cultivated the powers of oratory suited to these different states, and improved more in eloquence in the solitude of my dungeon, than perhaps I should have done in the busiest and most crowded scenes.

At length I proceeded to as regular a disposition of my time, as the man in his study who passes from mathematics to poetry, and from poetry to the law of nations, in the different parts of each single day; and I as seldom infringed upon my plan. Nor were my subjects of disquisition less numerous than his. I went over, by the assistance of memory only, a considerable part of Euclid during my confinement, and revived, day after day, the

series of facts and incidents in some of the most celebrated historians. I became myself a poet; and, while I described the sentiments cherished by the view of natural objects, recorded the characters and passions of men, and partook with a burning zeal in the generosity of their determinations, I eluded the squalid solitude of my dungeon, and wandered in idea through all the varieties of human society. I easily found expedients, such as the mind seems always to require, and which books and pens supply to the man at large, to record from time to time the progress that had been made.

While I was thus employed, I reflected with exultation, upon the degree in which man is independent of the smiles and frowns of fortune. I was beyond her reach, for I could fall no lower. To an ordinary eye I might seem destitute and miserable, but in reality I wanted for nothing. My fare was coarse; but I was in

health. My dungeon was noisome; but I felt no inconvenience. I was shut up from the usual means of exercise and air; but I found the method of exercising myself even to perspiration in my dungeon. I had no power of withdrawing my person from a disgustful society, in the most cheerful and valuable part of the day; but I soon brought to perfection the art of withdrawing my thoughts, and saw and heard the people about me, for just as short a time, and as seldom, as I pleased.

Such is man in himself considered; so simple his nature; so few his wants. How different from the man of artificial society! Palaces are built for his reception, a thousand vehicles provided for his exercise, provinces are ransacked for the gratification of his appetite, and the whole world traversed to supply him with apparel and furniture. Thus vast is his expenditure, and the purchase slavery. He is dependent on a thousand accidents for tranquil-

lity and health, and his body and soul are at the devotion of whoever will satisfy his imperious cravings.

In addition to the disadvantages of my present situation, I was reserved for an ignominious death. What then? Every man must die. No man knows how soon. It surely is not worse, to encounter the king of terrors, in health, and with every advantage for the collection of fortitude, than to encounter him, already half subdued by sickness and suffering. I was resolved at least fully to possess the days I had to live, and this is peculiarly in the power of the man who preserves his health to the last moment of his existence. Why should I suffer my mind to be invaded by unavailing regrets? Every sentiment of vanity, or rather of independence and justice, within me, instigated me to say to my persecutor, You may cut off my existence, but you cannot disturb my serenity.

CHAP. XIII.

In the midst of these reflections another thought, which had not before struck me, occurred to my mind. I exult, said I, and reasonably, over the impotence of my persecutor. Is not that impotence greater than I have yet imagined? I say, he may cut off my existence, but cannot disturb my serenity. It is true: my mind, the clearness of my spirit, the firmness of my temper are beyond his reach; is not my life equally so, if I please? What are the material obstacles, that man never subdued? What is the undertaking so arduous, that by some has not been accomplished? And, if by others, why not by me? Had they stronger motives than I? Was existence more variously

endeared to them, or had they more numerous methods by which to animate and adorn it; many of those who have exerted most perseverance and intrepidity, were obviously my inferiors in that respect. Why should not I be as daring as they? Adamant and steel have a ductility like water, to a mind sufficiently bold and contemplative. The mind is master of itself; and is endowed with powers that might enable it to laugh at the tyrant's vigilance. I passed and repassed these ideas in my mind; and, heated with the contemplation, I said, No, I will not die!

My reading, in early youth, had been extremely miscellaneous. I had read of housebreakers, to whom locks and bolts were a jest, and who, vain of their art, exhibited the experiment of entering a house the most strongly barricaded, with as little noise, and almost as little trouble, as other men would lift up a latch.

There is nothing so interesting to the juvenile mind, as the wonderful; there is no power that it so eagerly covets, as that of astonishing spectators by its miraculous exertions. Mind appeared, to my untutored reflections, vague, airy, and unfettered, the susceptible perceiver of reasons, but never intended by nature to be the slave of force. Why should it be in the power of man, to overtake and hold me by violence? Why, when I choose to withdraw myself, should I not be capable of eluding the most vigilant search? These limbs, and this trunk, are a cumbrous and unfortunate load for the power of thinking to drag along with it; but why should not the power of thinking be able to lighten the load, till it shall be no longer felt?—These early modes of reflection, were by no means indifferent to my present enquiries.

Our next-door neighbour at my fa-

ther's house had been a carpenter. Fresh from the sort of reading I have mentioned, I was eager to examine his tools, their powers and their uses. This carpenter was a man of a strong and vigorous mind; and, his faculties having been chiefly confined to the range of his profession, he was fertile in experiments and ingenious in reasoning upon these particular topics. I therefore obtained from him considerable satisfaction; and, my mind being set in action, I sometimes even improved upon the hints he furnished. His conversation was particularly agreeable to me; I at first worked with him sometimes for my amusement, and afterwards occasionally for a short time as his journeyman. I was constitutionally vigorous; and, by the experience thus attained, I added to the abstract possession of power, the skill of applying it, when I pleased, in such a manner, as that no part should be inefficient.

It is a strange, but no uncommon feature in the human mind, that the very resource of which we stand in greatest need in a critical situation, though already accumulated, it may be, by preceding industry, fails to present itself, at the time when it should be called into action. Thus my mind had passed through two very different stages since my imprisonment, before this means of liberation suggested itself. My faculties were overwhelmed in the first instance, and raised to a pitch of enthusiasm in the second, while in both I took it for granted, in a manner, that I must passively submit to the good pleasure of my persecutors.

During the period in which my mind had been thus undecided, and when I had been little more than a month in durance, the assizes, which were held twice a year in the town in which I was a prisoner, came on. Upon this occasion my

case was not brought forward, but was suffered to stand over six months longer. It would have been just the same, if I had had as strong reason to expect acquittal, as I had conviction. If I had been apprehended, upon the most frivolous reasons upon which any justice of the peace ever thought proper to commit a naked beggar for trial, I must still have waited about two hundred and seventeen days, before my innocence could be cleared. So imperfect are the effects of the boasted laws of a country, whose legislators hold their assembly from four to six months in every year! I could never discover with certainty, whether this delay were owing to any interference on the part of my prosecutor, or whether it fell out in the regular administration of justice, which is too solemn and dignified to accommodate itself to the rights or benefit of an insignificant individual.

But this was not the only incident that

occurred to me during my confinement, for which I could find no satisfactory solution. It was nearly at the same time, that the keeper began to alter his behaviour to me. He sent for me one morning into the part of the building which was appropriated for his own use, and, after some hesitation, told me he was sorry my accommodations had been so indifferent, and asked whether I should like to have a chamber in his family? I was struck with the unexpectedness of this question, and desired to know whether any body had employed him to ask it. No, he replied; but, now the assizes were over, he had fewer felons on his hands, and more time to look about him: He believed I was a good kind of a young man; and he had taken a sort of a liking to me. I fixed my eye upon his countenance as he said this. I could discover none of the usual symptoms of kindness; he appeared to me to be act-

ing a part, unnatural, and that sat with awkwardness upon him. He went on however to offer me the liberty of eating at his table, which, if I chose it, he said would make no difference to him, and he should not think of charging me any thing for it. He had always indeed as much upon his hands as one person could see to; but his wife and his daughter Peggy would be woundily pleased to hear a person of learning talk, as he understood I was; and perhaps I might not feel myself unpleasantly circumstanced in their company.

I reflected on this proposal, and had little doubt, notwithstanding what the keeper had affirmed to the contrary, that it did not proceed from any spontaneous humanity in him, but that he had, to speak the language of persons of his cast, good reasons for what he did. I busied myself in conjectures, as to who could be the author of this sort of indulgence

and attention. The two most likely persons were Mr. Falkland and Mr. Forester. The latter I knew to be a man austere and inexorable towards those whom he deemed vicious. He piqued himself upon being insensible to those softer emotions, which, he believed, answered no other purpose than to seduce us from our duty. Mr. Falkland on the contrary was a man of the acutest sensibility; hence arose his pleasures and his pains, his virtues and his vices. Though he were the bitterest enemy to whom I could possibly be exposed, and though no sentiments of humanity could divert or control the bent of his mind, I yet persuaded myself, that he was more likely than his kinsman, to visit in idea the scene of my dungeon, and to feel impelled to alleviate my sufferings.

This conjecture was by no means calculated to serve as balm to my mind.

My thoughts were full of irritation against my persecutor. How could I think kindly of a man, in competition with the gratification of whose ruling passion my good name or my life was deemed of no consideration? I saw him crushing the one, and bringing the other into jeopardy, with a quietness and composure on his part that I could not recollect without horror. I knew not what were his plans respecting me. I knew not whether he troubled himself so much as to form a barren wish, for the preservation of one whose future prospects he had so iniquitously tarnished. I had hitherto been silent as to my principal topic of recrimination. But I was by no means certain, that I should consent to go out of the world in silence, the victim of this man's obduracy and art. In every view I felt my heart ulcerated with a sense of his injustice; and my very soul spurned these pitiful indulgences, at a time that he

was grinding me into dust with the inexorableness of his vengeance.

I was influenced by these sentiments in my reply to the jailor; and I found a secret pleasure in pronouncing them in all their bitterness. I viewed him with a sarcastic smile, and said, I was glad to find him of a sudden become so humane: I was not however without some penetration as to the humanity of a jailor, and could guess at the circumstances by which it was produced. But he might tell his employer that his cares were fruitless; I would accept no favours from a man that held a halter about my neck, and had courage enough to endure the worst both in time to come and now.—The jailor looked at me with astonishment, and, turning upon his heel, exclaimed, Well done, my cock! You have not had your learning for nothing, I see. You are set upon not dying dunghil. But that is to come, lad; you

had better by half keep your courage till you shall find it wanted.

The assizes, which passed over without influence to me, produced a great revolution among my fellow prisoners. I lived long enough in the jail to witness a general mutation of its inhabitants. One of the housebreakers (the rival of the duke of Bedford), and the coiner, were hanged. Two more were cast for transportation, and the rest acquitted. The transports remained with us ; and, though the prison was thus lightened of nine of its inhabitants, there were, at the next half yearly period of assizes, as many persons on the felons' side within three, as I had found there on my first arrival.

The soldier, whose story I have already recorded, died on the evening of the very day on which the judges arrived, of a disease the consequence of his confinement. Such was the justice, that resulted from the laws of his country to

an individual who would have been the ornament of any age, one who, of all the men I ever knew, was perhaps the kindest, of the most feeling heart, of the most engaging and unaffected manners, and the most unblemished life. The name of this man was Brightwel. Were it possible for my pen to consecrate him to never dying fame, I could undertake no task more grateful to my heart. His judgment was penetrating and manly, totally unmixed with imbecility and confusion, while at the same time there was such an uncontending frankness in his countenance, that a superficial observer would have supposed he must have been the prey of the first plausible knavery that was practised against him. Great reason have I to remember him with affection! He was the most ardent, I had almost said, the last of my friends. Nor did I remain in this respect in his debt. There was indeed a great con-

geniality, if I may presume to say so, in our characters, except that I cannot pretend to rival the originality and self-created vigour of his mind, or to compare with, what the world has scarcely surpassed, the correctness and untainted purity of his conduct. He heard my story, as far as I thought proper to disclose it, with interest; he examined it with sincere impartiality; and, if at first any doubt remained upon his mind, a frequent observation of me in my most unguarded moments taught him in no long time to place an unreserved confidence in my innocence.

He talked of the injustice of which we were mutually victims without bitterness, and delighted to believe that the time would come, when the possibility of such intolerable oppression would be extirpated. But this, he said, was a happiness reserved for posterity; it was too late for us to reap the benefit of it. It was

some consolation to him, that he could not tell the period in his past life, which the best judgment of which he was capable would teach him to spend better. He could say, with as much reason as most men, he had discharged his duty. But he foresaw that he should not survive his present calamity. This was his prediction, while yet in health. He might be said, in a certain sense, to have a broken heart. But, if that phrase were in any way applicable to him, sure never was despair more calm, more full of resignation and serenity.

At no time in the whole course of my adventures, was I exposed to a shock more severe, than I received from this man's death. The circumstances of his fate presented themselves to my mind in their full complication of iniquity. From him and the execrations with which I loaded the government, that could be the instrument of his tragedy,

I turned to myself. I beheld the catastrophe of Brightwel with envy. A thousand times I longed that my corse had lain in death, instead of his. I was only reserved, as I persuaded myself, for unutterable woe. In a few days he would have been acquitted, his liberty, his reputation restored; mankind perhaps, struck with the injustice he had suffered, would have shown themselves eager to balance his misfortunes, and obliterate his disgrace. But this man died; and I remained alive! I, who, though not less wrongfully treated than he, had no hope of reparation, must be marked as long as I lived for a villain, and in my death probably held up to the scorn and detestation of my species!

Such were some of the immediate reflections, which the fate of this unfortunate martyr produced in my mind. Yet my intercourse with Brightwel was not in the review without its portion of com-

fort. I said, This man has seen through the veil of calumny that overshades me; he has understood, and has loved me. Why should I despair? May I not meet hereafter with men ingenuous like him, who shall do me justice, and sympathise with my calamity? With that consolation I will be satisfied. I will rest in the arms of friendship, and forget the malignity of the world. Henceforth I will be contented with tranquil obscurity, with the cultivation of sentiment and wisdom, and the exercise of benevolence within a narrow circle. It was thus that my mind became excited to the project I was about to undertake.

I had no sooner meditated the idea of an escape, than I determined upon the following method of facilitating the preparations for it. I undertook to ingratiate myself with my keeper. In the world I have generally found such persons as had been acquainted with the

outline of my story, regarding me with a sort of loathing and abhorrence, which made them avoid me with as much care as if I had been spotted with the plague. The idea of my having first robbed my patron, and then endeavoured to clear myself by charging him with subornation against me, placed me in a class distinct from, and infinitely more guilty than, that of common felons. But this man was too good a master of his profession, to entertain aversion against a fellow creature upon that score. He considered the persons committed to his custody, merely as so many human bodies, for whom he was responsible that they should be forthcoming in time and place; and the difference of innocence and guilt he looked down upon as an affair beneath his attention. I had not therefore the prejudices to encounter in recommending myself to him, that I have found so peculiarly obstinate in

other cases. Add to which, the same motive, whatever it was, that had made him so profuse in his offers a little before, had probably its influence on the present occasion.

I informed him of my skill in the profession of a joiner, and offered to make him half a dozen handsome chairs, if he would facilitate my obtaining the tools necessary for carrying on my profession in my present confinement; for, without his consent previously obtained, it would have been in vain for me to expect that I could quietly exert an industry of this kind, even if my existence had depended upon it. He looked at me first, as asking himself what he was to understand by this novel proposal; and then, his countenance most graciously relaxing, said, he was glad I was come off a little of my high notions and my buckram, and he would see what he could do. Two days after, he signified

his compliance. He said that, as to the matter of the present I had offered him, he thought nothing of that, I might do as I pleased in it; but I might depend upon every civility from him that he could show with safety to himself, if so be as, when he was civil, I did not offer a second time for to snap and take him up short.

Having thus gained my preliminary, I gradually accumulated tools of various sorts, gimlets, piercers, chisels, *et cetera*. I immediately set myself to work. The nights were long, and the sordid eagerness of my keeper, notwithstanding his ostentatious generosity, was great; I therefore petitioned for, and was indulged with, a bit of candle, that I might amuse myself for an hour or two with my work after I was locked up in my dungeon. I did not however by any means apply constantly to the work I had undertaken, and my jailor betrayed various

tokens of impatience. Perhaps he was afraid I should not have finished it, before I was hanged. I however insisted upon working at my leisure as I pleased, and this he did not venture expressly to dispute. In addition to the advantages thus obtained, I procured secretly from miss Peggy, who now and then came into the jail to make her observations of the prisoners, and who seemed to have conceived some partiality for my person, the implement of an iron crow.

In these proceedings it is easy to trace the vice and duplicity that must be expected to grow out of injustice. I know not whether my readers will pardon the sinister advantage I extracted from the mysterious concessions of my keeper. But I must acknowledge my weakness in that respect; I am writing my adventures, and not my apology; and I was not prepared to maintain the unvaried

sincerity of my manners, at the expence of a speedy close to my existence.

My plan was now digested. I believed that, by means of the crow, I could easily, and without much noise, force the door of my dungeon from its hinges, or, if not, that I could, in case of necessity, cut away the lock. This door led into a narrow passage, bounded on one side by the range of dungeons, and on the other by the jailor's and turnkeys' apartments, through which was the usual entrance from the street. This outlet I dared not attempt, for fear of disturbing the persons close to whose very door I should in that case have found it necessary to pass. I determined therefore upon another door at the further end of the passage, which was well barricaded, and which led to a sort of garden in the occupation of the keeper. This garden I had never entered, but I had had an opportunity of observing it from

the window of the felons' day-room, which looked that way, the room itself being immediately over the range of dungeons. I perceived that it was bounded by a wall of considerable height, which I was told by my fellow prisoners was the extremity of the jail on that side, and beyond which was a back-lane of some length that terminated in the skirts of the town. Upon an accurate observation, and much reflection upon the subject, I found I should be able, if once I got into the garden, with my gimlets and piercers inserted at proper distances to make a sort of ladder, by means of which I could clear the wall, and once more take possession of the sweets of liberty. I preferred this wall to that which immediately skirted my dungeon, on the other side of which was a populous street.

I suffered about two days to elapse from the period at which I had thoroughly digested my project, and then in the

very middle of the night began to set about its execution. The first door was attended with considerable difficulty, but at length this obstacle was happily removed. The second door was fastened on the inside. I was therefore able with perfect ease to push back the bolts. But the lock, which of course was depended upon for the principal security, and was therefore strong, was double shot, and the key taken away. I endeavoured with my chisel to force back the bolt of the lock, but to no purpose. I then unscrewed the box of the lock; and that being taken away, the door was no longer opposed to my wishes.

Thus far I had proceeded with the happiest success, but close on the other side of the door there was a kennel with a large mastiff dog, of which I had not the smallest previous knowledge. Though I stepped along in the most careful manner, this animal was disturbed, and be-

gan to bark. I was extremely disconcerted, but immediately applied myself to soothe the animal, in which I presently succeeded. I then returned along the passage to listen whether any body had been disturbed by the noise of the dog; resolved, if that were the case, that I would return to my dungeon, and endeavour to replace every thing in its former state. But the whole appeared perfectly quiet, and I was encouraged to proceed in my operation.

I now got to the wall, and had nearly gained half the ascent, when I heard a voice at the garden-door, crying, Holloa! who is there? who opened the door? The man received no answer, and the night was too dark for him to distinguish objects at any distance. He therefore returned, as I judged, into the house for a light. Meantime the dog, understanding the key in which these interrogations were uttered, began barking

again more violently than ever. I had now no possibility of retreat, and I was not without hopes that I might yet accomplish my object, and clear the wall. Meanwhile a second man came out, while the other was getting his lantern, and by the time I had got to the top of the wall was able to perceive me. He immediately set up a shout, and threw a large stone, which grazed me in its flight. Alarmed at my situation, I was obliged to descend on the other side without taking the necessary precautions, and in my fall nearly dislocated my ancle.

There was a door in the wall, of which I was not previously apprised; and, this being opened, the two men with the lantern were on the other side in an instant. They had then nothing to do but to run along the lane to the place from which I had descended. I endeavoured to rise after my fall, but the pain was so intense, that I was scarcely

able to stand, and, after having limped a few paces, I twisted my foot under me, and fell down again. I had now no remedy, and quietly suffered myself to be retaken.

CHAP. XIV.

I WAS conducted to the keeper's room for that night, and the two men sat up with me. I was accosted with many interrogatories, to which I gave little answer, but complained of the hurt in my leg. To this I could obtain no reply except, Curse you, my lad! if that be all, we will give you some ointment for that; we will anoint it with a little cold iron. They were indeed excessively sulky with me, for having broken their night's rest, and given them all this trouble. In the morning they were as good as their word, fixing a pair of fetters upon both my legs, regardless of the ancle which was now swelled to a considerable size, and then fastening me, with a padlock, to a staple in the floor

of my dungeon. I expostulated with warmth upon this treatment, and told them, that I was a man upon whom the law had as yet passed no censure, and who therefore, in the eye of the law, was innocent. But they bid me keep such fudge for people who knew no better; they knew what they did, and would answer it to any court in England.

The pain of the fetter was intolerable. I endeavoured in various ways to relieve it, and even privily to free my leg; but the more it was swelled, the more was this rendered impossible. I then resolved to bear it with patience: still, the longer it continued, the worse it grew. After two days and two nights, I intreated the turnkey to go, and ask the surgeon who usually attended the prison, to look at it, for, if it continued longer as it was, I was convinced it would mortify. But he glared surlily at me, and

said, Damn my blood! I should like to see that day. To die of a mortification, is too good an end for such a rascal! At the time that he thus addressed me, the whole mass of my blood was already fevered by the anguish I had undergone, my patience was wholly exhausted, and I was silly enough to be irritated beyond bearing, by his impertinence and vulgarity. Look you, Mr. Turnkey, said I, there is one thing that such fellows as you are set over us for, and another thing that you are not. You are to take care we do not escape; but it is no part of your office to call us names and abuse us. If I were not chained to the floor, you dare as well eat your fingers as use such language; and, take my word for it, you shall yet live to repent of your insolence.

While I thus spoke, the man stared at me with astonishment. He was so little accustomed to such retorts, that, at

first, he could scarcely believe his ears; and such was the firmness of my manner, that he seemed to forget, for a moment, that I was not at large. But, as soon as he had time to recollect himself, he did not deign even to be angry. His face relaxed into a smile of contempt, he snapped his fingers at me, and, turning upon his heel, exclaimed, Well said, my cock! crow away! Have a care you do not burst! and, as he shut the door upon me, mimicked the voice of the animal he mentioned.

This rejoinder brought me to myself in a moment, and shewed me the impotence of the resentment I was expressing. But, though he thus put an end to the violence of my speech, the torture of my body continued as great as ever. I was determined to change my mode of attack. The same turnkey returned in a few minutes; and, as he approached me, to put down some food he had

brought, I slipped a shilling into his hands, saying at the same time, My good fellow, for God's sake, go to the surgeon: I am sure you do not wish me to perish for want of assistance. The fellow put the shilling in his pocket, looked hard at me, and then with one nod of his head, and without uttering a single word, went away. The surgeon presently after made his appearance; and, finding the part in a high state of inflammation, ordered certain applications, and gave peremptory directions that the fetter should not be replaced upon that leg, till a cure had been effected. It was a full month before the leg was perfectly healed, and made equally strong and flexible with the other.

The condition in which I was now placed, was totally different from that which had preceded this attempt. I was chained all day in my dungeon, with no other mitigation, except that the door

was regularly opened for a few hours in an afternoon, at which time some of the prisoners occasionally came and spoke to me, particularly one, who, though he could ill replace my beloved Brightwel, was not deficient in excellent qualities. This was no other than the individual whom Mr. Falkland had, some months before, dismissed upon an accusation of murder. His courage was gone, his garb was squalid, and the comeliness and clearness of his countenance utterly obliterated. He also was innocent, worthy, brave, and benevolent. He was, I believe, afterwards acquitted, and turned loose, to wander a desolate and perturbed spectre through the world. My manual labours were now at an end; my dungeon was searched every night, and every kind of tool carefully kept from me. The straw, which had been hitherto allowed me, was removed, under pretence that it was adapted for concealment; and the

only conveniences with which I was indulged, were a chair and a blanket.

A prospect of some alleviation in no long time opened upon me; but this my usual ill-fortune rendered abortive. The keeper once more made his appearance, and with his former unconstitutional and ambiguous humanity. He pretended to be surprised at my want of every accommodation. He reprehended, in strong terms, my attempt to escape, and observed, that there must be an end of civility from people in his situation, if gentlemen, after all, would not know when they were well. It was necessary in cases the like of this, to let the law take its course; and it would be ridiculous in me to complain, if, after a regular trial, things should go hard with me. He was desirous of being in every respect my friend, if I would let him.—In the midst of this circumlocution and preamble, he was called

away from me for something relating to the business of his office. In the mean time I ruminated upon his overtures; and, detesting as I did the source from which I conceived them to flow, I could not help reflecting how far it would be possible to extract from them the means of escape. But my meditations in this case were vain. The keeper returned no more during the remainder of that day, and, on the next, an incident occurred which put an end to all expectations from his kindness.

An active mind, which has once been forced into any particular train, can scarcely be persuaded to desert it as hopeless. I had studied my chains, during the extreme anguish that I endured from the pressure of the fetter upon the ancle which had been sprained; and, though, from the swelling and acute sensibility of the part, I had found all attempts at relief in that instance impracticable, I ob-

tained, from the coolness of my investigation, another and apparently superior advantage. During the night, my dungeon was in a state of complete darkness; but, when the door was open, the case was somewhat different. The passage indeed into which it opened, was so narrow, and the opposite dead wall so near, that it was but a glimmering and melancholy light that entered my apartment, even at full noon, and when the door was at its widest extent. But my eyes, after a practice of two or three weeks, accommodated themselves to this circumstance, and I learned to distinguish the minutest objects. One day, as I was alternately meditating and examining the objects around me, I chanced to observe a nail trodden into the mud-floor at no great distance from me. I immediately conceived the desire of possessing myself of this implement; but, for fear of surprise, people passing perpetu-

ally to and fro, I contented myself, for the present, with remarking its situation so accurately, that I might easily find it again in the dark. Accordingly, as soon as my door was shut, I seized upon this new treasure, and, having contrived to fashion it to my purpose, found that I could unlock with it the padlock that fastened me to the staple in the floor. This I regarded as no inconsiderable advantage, separately from the use I might derive from it in relation to my principal object. My chain permitted me to move only about eighteen inches to the right or left; and, having borne this confinement for several weeks, my very heart leaped at the pitiful consolation of being able to range without constraint, the miserable coop in which I was immured. This incident had occurred several days previously to the last visit of my keeper.

From this time it had been my con-

stant practice, to liberate myself every night, and not to replace things in their former situation till I awoke in the morning, and expected shortly to perceive the entrance of the turnkey. Security breeds negligence. On the morning succeeding my conference with the jailor, it so happened, whether I overslept myself, or the turnkey went his round earlier than usual, that I was roused from my sleep by the noise he made in opening the cell next to my own; and, though I exerted the utmost diligence, yet having to grope for my materials in the dark, I was unable to fasten the chain to the staple, before he entered as usual with his lantern. He was extremely surprised to find me disengaged, and immediately summoned the principal keeper. I was questioned respecting my method of proceeding; and, as I believed concealment could lead to nothing, but a severer search, and a more accurate watch,

I readily acquainted them with the exact truth. The illustrious personage, whose function it was to control the inhabitants of these walls, was, by this last instance, completely exasperated against me. Artifice and fair speaking were at an end. His eyes sparkling with fury, he exclaimed, that he was now convinced of the folly of shewing kindness to rascals, the scum of the earth, such as I was; and, damn him, if any body should catch him at that again towards any one. I had cured him effectually! He was astonished that the laws had not provided some terrible retaliation, for thieves that attempted to deceive their jailors. Hanging was a thousand times too good for me!

Having vented his indignation, he proceeded to give such orders, as the united instigations of anger and alarm suggested to his mind. My apartment was changed. I was conducted to a

room called the strong room, the door of which opened into the middle cell of the range of dungeons. It was under-ground, as they were, and had also the day-room for felons, already described, immediately over it. It was spacious and dreary. The door had not been opened for years; the air was putrid; and the walls hung round with damps and mil-dew. The fetters, the padlock, and the staple, were employed, as in the former case, in addition to which they put on me a pair of hand-cuffs. For my first provision, the keeper sent me nothing but a bit of bread, mouldy and black, and some dirty and stinking water. I know not indeed whether this is to be regarded as gratuitous tyranny on the part of the jailor; the law having providently di-rected in certain cases, that the water to be administered to the prisoners, shall be taken from "the next sink or puddle,

nearest to the jail *." It was further ordered, that one of the turnkeys should sleep in the cell that formed a sort of antichamber to my apartment. Though every convenience was provided, to render this chamber fit for the reception of a personage of a dignity so superior to the felon he was appointed to guard, he expressed much dissatisfaction at the mandate: but there was no alternative.

The situation to which I was thus removed, was, apparently, the most undesirable that could be imagined; but I was not discouraged. I had for some time learned not to judge by appearances. The apartment was dank and unwholesome; but I had acquired the secret of counteracting these influences. My door was kept continually shut, and

* In the case of the *peine forte et dure*. See State Trials, Vol. I, *anno* 1615.

the other prisoners were debarred access to me; but, if the intercourse of our fellow-men has its pleasures, solitude on the other hand is not without its advantages. In solitude we can pursue our own thoughts undisturbed; and I was able to call up at will the most pleasing avocations. Beside which, to one who meditated such designs as now filled my mind, solitude had peculiar recommendations. I was scarcely left to myself, before I tried an experiment, the idea of which I conceived, while they were fixing my hand-cuffs; and, with my teeth only, disengaged myself from this restraint. The hours at which I was visited by the keepers were regular, and I took care to be provided for them. Add to which, I had a narrow grated window near the ceiling, about nine inches in perpendicular, and a foot and a half horizontally, which, though small, admitted a much stronger light, than that

to which I had been accustomed for several weeks. Thus circumstanced I scarcely ever found myself in total darkness, and was better provided against surprises, than I had been in my preceding situation. Such were the sentiments which this change of abode immediately suggested.

I had been a very little time removed, when I received an unexpected visit from Thomas, Mr. Falkland's footman, whom I have already mentioned in the course of my narrative. A servant of Mr. Forester happened to come to the town where I was imprisoned, a few weeks before, while I was confined with the hurt in my ancle, and had called in to see me. The account he gave of what he observed, had been the source of many an uneasy sensation to Thomas. The former visit was a matter of mere curiosity, but Thomas was of the better order of servants. He was considerably struck at the sight of me. Though my mind was now serene, and

my health sufficiently good, yet the floridness of my complexion was gone, and there was a rudeness in my physiognomy, the consequence of hardship and fortitude, extremely unlike the sleekness of my better days. Thomas looked alternately in my face, at my hands and my feet; and then fetched a deep sigh. After a pause:

Lord bless us! said he, in a voice in which commiseration was sufficiently perceptible, is this you?

Why not, Thomas? You knew I was sent to prison, did not you?

Prison! and must people in prison be shackled and bound of that fashion?—and where do you lay of nights?

Here.

Here? Why there is no bed!

No, Thomas, I am not allowed a bed. I had straw formerly, but that is taken away.

And do they take off them there things of nights?

No; I am expected to sleep just as you see.

Sleep? Why I thought this was a Christian country; but this usage is too bad for a dog.

You must not say so, Thomas. It is what the wisdom of government has thought fit to provide.

Zounds, how I have been deceived! They told me what a fine thing it was to be an Englishman, and about liberty and property, and all that there; and I find it is all a flam. Lord, what fools we be! Things are done under our very noses, and we know nothing of the matter; and a parcel of fellows with grave faces, swear to us, that such things never happen but in France, and other countries the like of that. Why, you han't been tried, ha'you?

No.

And what signifies being tried, when they do worse than hang a man, and

all beforehand? Well, master Williams, you have been very wicked to be sure, and I thought it would have done me good to see you hanged. But, I do not know how it is, one's heart melts, and pity comes over one, if we take time to cool. I know that ought not to be; but, damn it, when I talked of your being hanged, I did not think of your suffering all this into the bargain.

Soon after this conversation Thomas left me. The idea of the long connection of our families rushed upon his memory, and he felt more for my sufferings, at the moment, than I did for myself. In the afternoon I was surprised to see him again. He said, that he could not get the thought of me out of his mind, and therefore he hoped I would not be displeased, at his coming once more to take leave of me. I could perceive that he had something upon his mind, which he did not know how to discharge. One of

the turnkeys had each time come into the room with him, and continued as long as he staid. Upon some avocation however, a noise I believe in the passage, the turnkey went as far as the door to satisfy his curiosity; and Thomas, watching the opportunity, slipped into my hand a chisel, a file, and a saw, exclaiming at the same time with a sorrowful tone, I know I am doing wrong; but, if they hang me too, I cannot help it; I cannot do no other. For Christ's sake, get out of this place; I cannot bear the thoughts of it!—I received the implements with great joy, and thrust them into my bosom; and, as soon as he was gone, concealed them in the rushes of my chair. For himself he had accomplished the object for which he came, and presently after bade me farewel.

The next day, the keepers, I know not for what reason, were more than usually industrious in their search, saying, though

without assigning any ground for their suspicion, that they were sure I had some tool in my possession that I ought not; but the depository I had chosen escaped them.

I waited from this time, the greater part of a week, that I might have the benefit of a bright moon-light. It was necessary that I should work in the night; it was necessary that my operations should be performed, between the last visit of the keepers at night, and their first in the morning, that is, between nine in the evening and seven. In my dungeon, as I have already said, I passed fourteen or sixteen hours of the four and twenty undisturbed; but, since I had acquired a character for mechanical ingenuity, a particular exception, with respect to me, was made from the general rules of the prison.

It was ten o'clock when I entered on my undertaking. The room in which

I was confined, was secured with a double door. This was totally superfluous for the purpose of my detention, since there was a centinel planted on the outside: But it was very fortunate for my plan; because these doors prevented the easy communication of sound, and afforded me tolerable satisfaction that, with a little care in my mode of proceeding, I might be secure against the danger of being overheard. I first took off my hand-cuffs. I then filed through my fetters; and next performed the same service to three of the iron bars that secured my window, to which I climbed, partly by the assistance of my chair, and partly by means of certain irregularities in the wall. All this was the work of more than two hours. When the bars were filed through, I easily forced them a little from the perpendicular, and then drew them, one by one, out of the wall, into which they were sunk about three inches perfectly straight,

and without any precaution to prevent their being removed. But the space thus obtained, was by no means wide enough to admit the passing of my body. I therefore applied myself, partly with my chisel, and partly with one of the iron bars, to the loosening the brick work; and, when I had thus disengaged four or five bricks, I got down and piled them upon the floor. This operation I repeated three or four times. The space was now sufficient for my purpose; and having crept through the opening, I stepped upon a sort of shed on the outside.

I was now in a kind of rude area between two dead walls, that south of the felon's day-room (the windows of which were at the east end), and the wall of the prison. But I had not, as formerly, any instruments to assist me in scaling the wall, which was of a considerable height. There was, of consequence, no resource for me, but that of effecting a practicable

breach in the lower part of the wall, which was of no contemptible strength, being of stone on the outside, with a facing of brick within. The rooms for the debtors, were at right angles with the building from which I had just escaped; and, as the night was extremely bright, I was in momentary danger, particularly in case of the least noise, of being discovered by them, several of their windows commanding this area. Thus circumstanced, I determined to make the shed answer the purpose of concealment. It was locked; but, with the broken link of my fetters, which I had had the precaution to bring with me, I found no great difficulty in opening the lock. I had now got a sufficient means of hiding my person while I proceeded in my work, attended with no other disadvantage, than that of being obliged to leave the door through which I had thus broken, a little open for the sake of light.

After some time, I had removed a considerable part of the brick-work of the outer wall; but when I came to the stone, I found the undertaking infinitely more difficult. The mortar which bound together the building, was by length of time nearly petrified, and appeared to my first efforts, one solid rock of the hardest adamant. I had now been six hours incessantly engaged in incredible labour: my chisel broke in the first attempt upon this new obstacle; and between fatigue already endured, and the seemingly invincible difficulty before me, I concluded that I must remain where I was, and gave up the idea of further effort as useless. At the same time the moon, whose light had till now been of the greatest use to me, set, and I was left in total darkness.

After a respite of ten minutes however, I returned to the attack with new vigour. It could not be less than two hours, before the first stone was loosened from the

edifice. In one hour more, the space was sufficient to admit of my escape. The pile of bricks I had left in the strong room was considerable. But it was a mole-hill compared with the ruins I had forced from the outer wall. I am fully assured that the work I had thus performed, would have been to a common labourer, with every advantage of tools, the business of two or three days.

But my difficulties, instead of being ended, seemed to be only begun. The day broke, before I had completed the opening, and, in ten minutes more, the keepers would probably enter my apartment, and perceive the devastation I had left. The lane, which connected the side of the prison through which I had escaped, with the adjacent country, was formed chiefly by two dead walls, with here and there a stable, a few warehouses, and some mean habitations tenanted by the lower order of people. My best security

lay, in clearing the town as soon as possible, and depending upon the open country for protection. My arms were intolerably swelled and bruised with my labour, and my strength seemed wholly exhausted with fatigue. Speed I was nearly unable to exert for any continuance; and, if I could, with the enemy so close at my heels, speed would too probably have been useless. It appeared as if I were now in almost the same situation, as that in which I had been placed five or six weeks before, in which, after having completed my escape, I was obliged to yield myself up, without resistance, to my pursuers. I was not however disabled as then; I was capable of exertion, to what precise extent I could not ascertain; and I was well aware that every instance in which I should fail of my purpose, would contribute to enhance the difficulty of any future attempt. Such were the considerations that presented themselves

in relation to my escape; and, even if that were effected, I had to reckon among my difficulties, that, at the time I quitted my prison, I was destitute of every resource, and had not a shilling remaining in the world.

END OF VOL. II.

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